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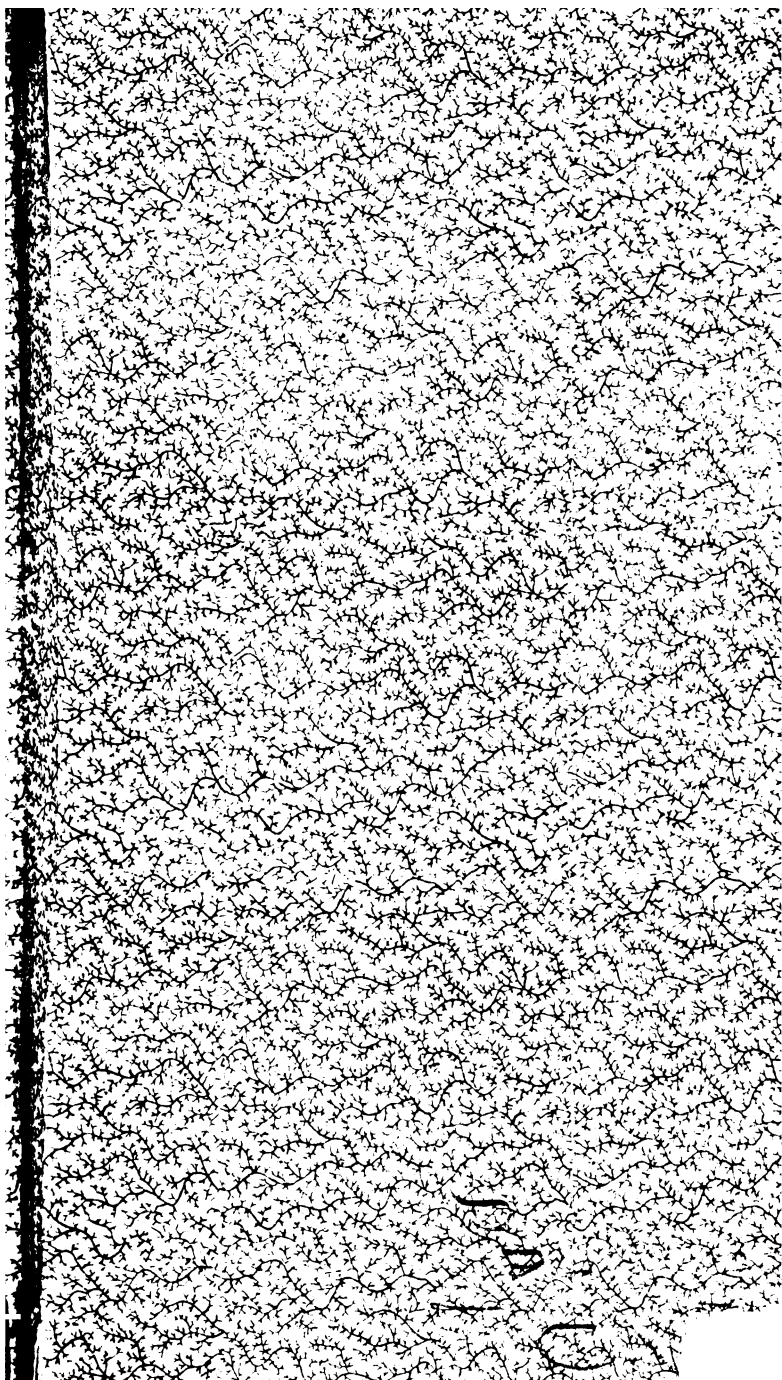
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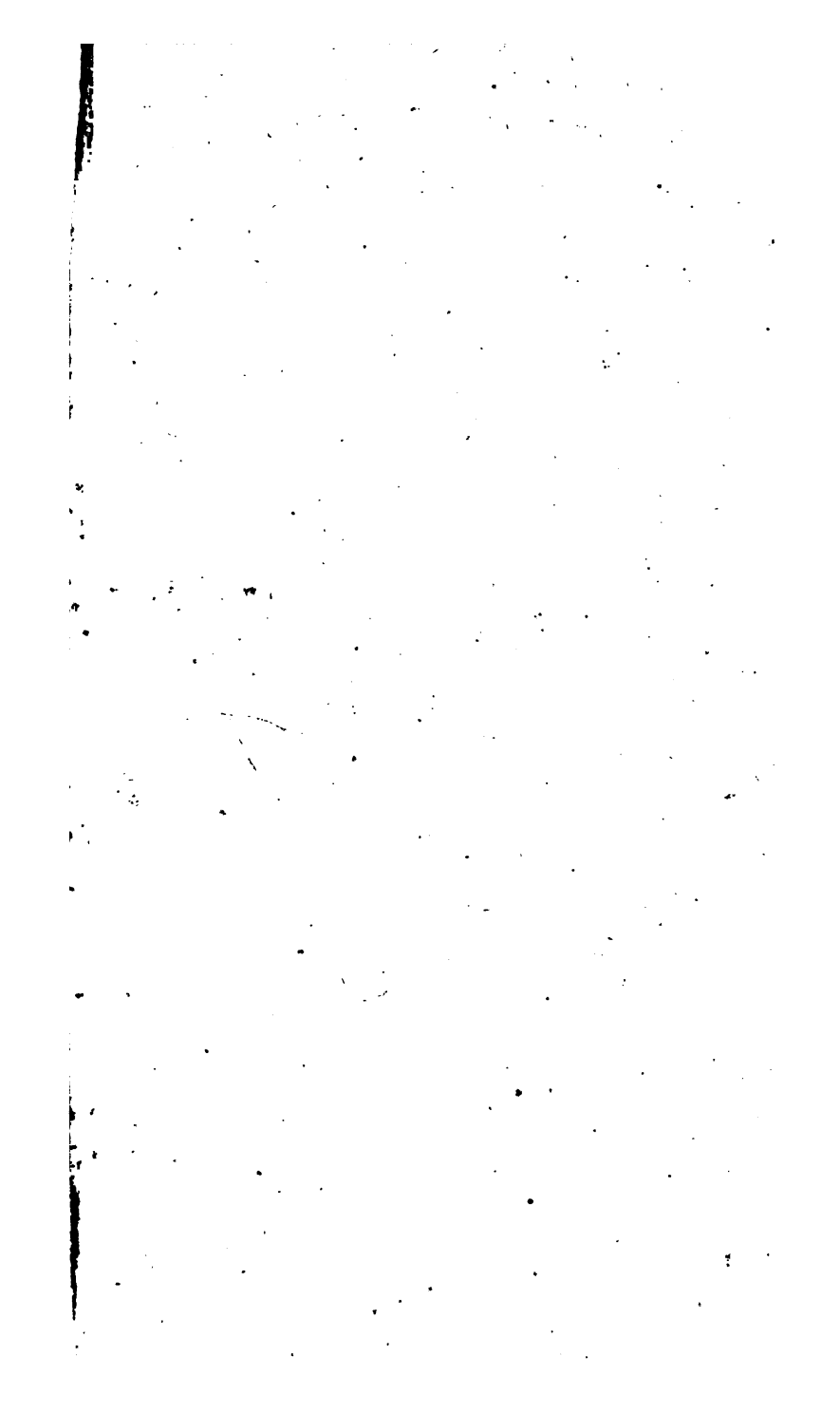
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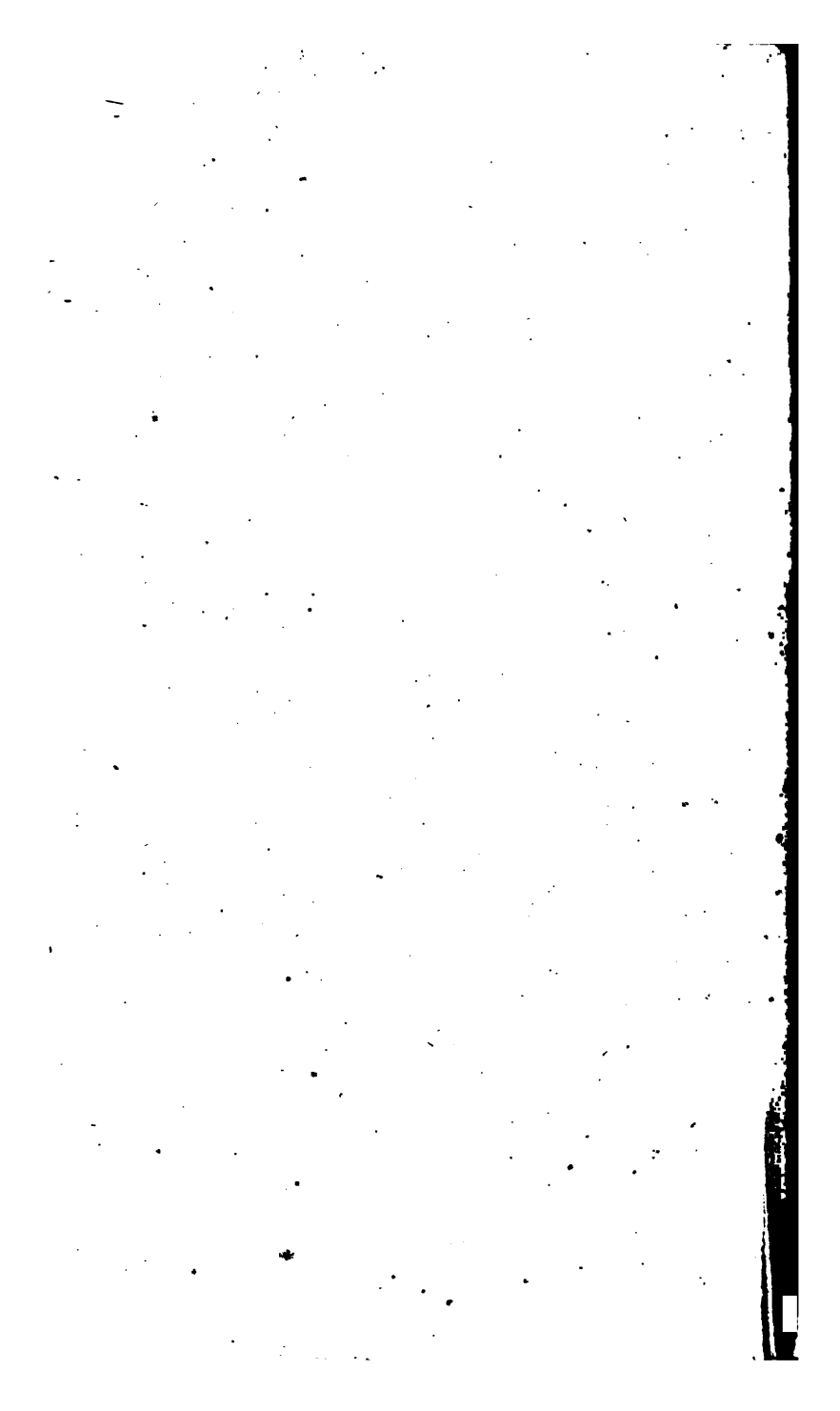


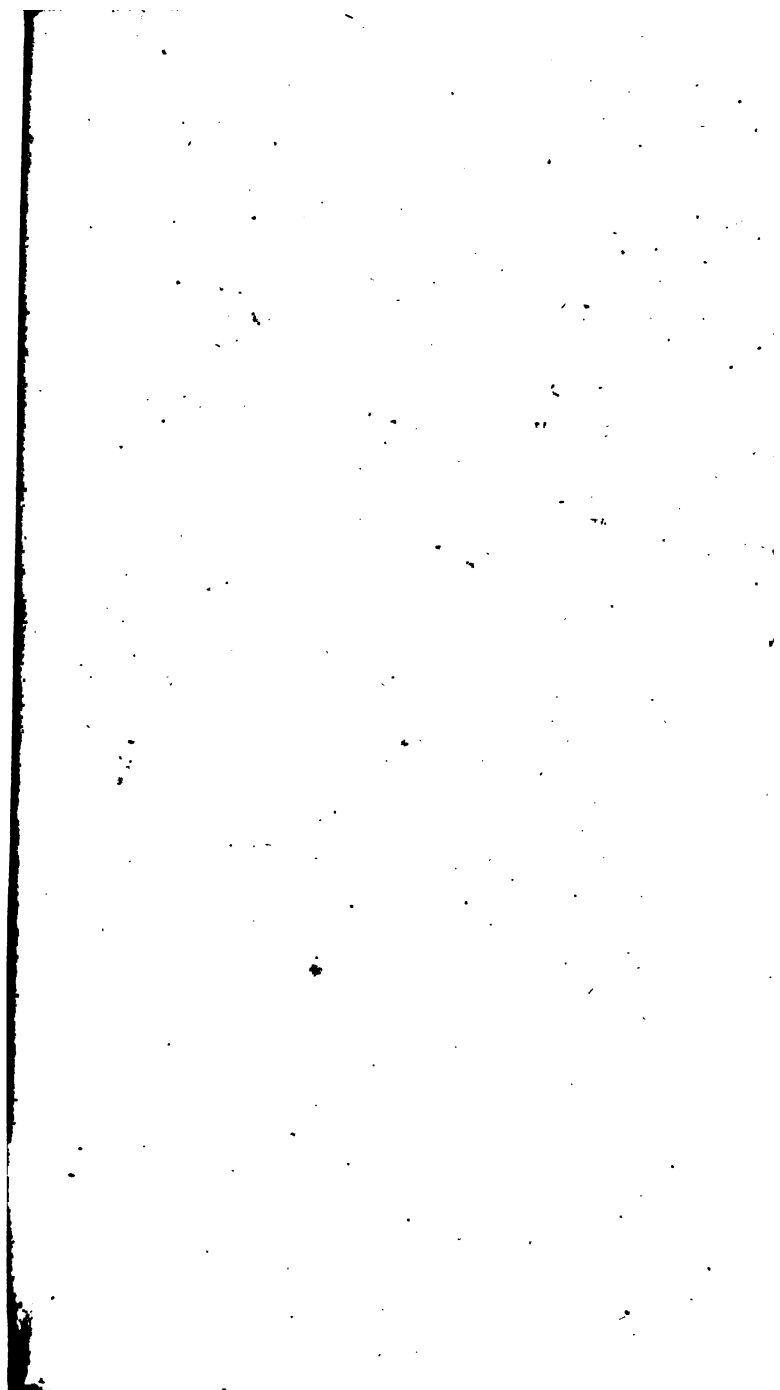
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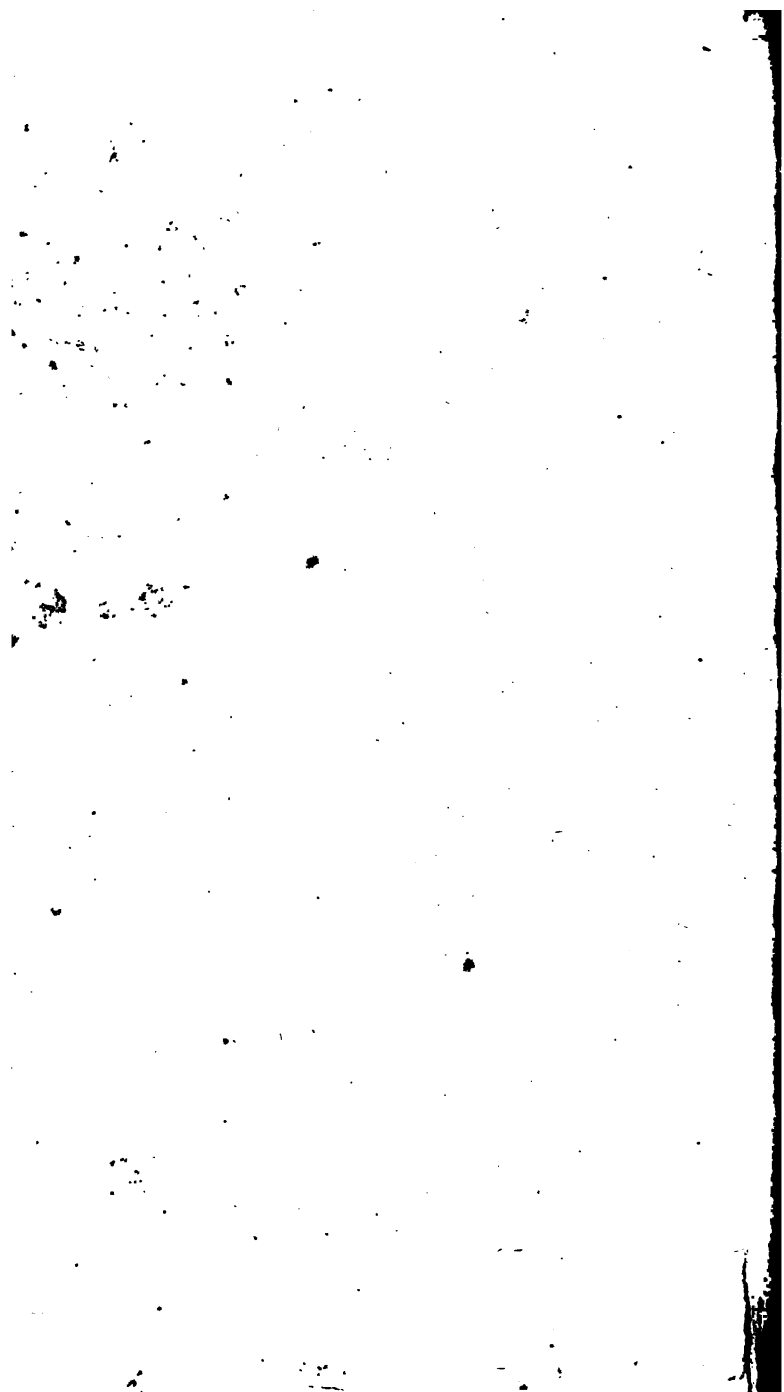


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SKETCH OF OLD ENGLAND.

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OF

OLD ENGLAND,

BY

A NEW-ENGLAND MAN.

J. P. Paulding.

" Republicanism, as it exists beyond the Atlantic, is all the glories of bundling, gouging, negro-driving, and dram-drinking; such poems as the Columbiad; such speeches as Mr. Adams makes at convivial meetings; and young ladies, who, when asked to dance, reply, "I guess I have no occasion."

QUARTERLY REVIEW.

" Often while waiting at table, and listening to their disgusting opinions, I have been called forward by one of the guests, and struck in the face severely, for some trivial mistake I had committed in serving him with food. In South Carolina, the guests do not hesitate to chastise their entertainers' servants whenever they feel disposed; and a party of white people there, often make cursing and beating their slaves in attendance, their chief employment during dinner." BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

" Any American will gratify a stranger by giving an account of himself; and if the truth is unfavourable to him, he will invent falsehoods, rather than not play the egotist." " The Americans are more detestable than any other people under the influence of ardent spirits. Liquor only serves to draw forth their natural coarseness, impudence, and rankness of feelings." HOWARD'S TRAVELS.

" These scourgers and murderers of slaves."

EDINBURGH REVIEW.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

NEW-YORK:

CHARLES WILEY, 3 WALL-STREET.

1822.

J. Seymour, printer.



Southern District of New-York, ss.

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the sixteenth day of July, in the forty-sixth year of the Independence of the United States of America, that Charles Wiley of the said District, hath deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as proprietor, in the words following, to wit:

"A Sketch of Old England, by a New-England Man.

"Republicanism, as it exists beyond the Atlantic, is all the glories of bundling, gouging, negro-driving, and dram-drinking; such poems as the Columbiad; such speeches as Mr. Adams makes at convivial meetings; and young ladies, who, when asked to dance, reply, "I guess I have no occasion."

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"These Scourgers and murderers of slaves."

EDINBURGH REVIEW.

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JAMES DILL,

Clerk of the Southern District of New-York.

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ADVERTISEMENT OF THE EDITOR.

THE following Letters were addressed to a gentleman residing in one of the Eastern states, without any view to their publication.

The person to whom they were written has, however, been induced to offer them to the public, in consequence of having lately seen the Travels of Howitt, Howison, Welby, &c. ; and also the prospectus of a new work on the comparative state of crime in this country and in England. These works are evidently written with the exclusive objects of discouraging emigration to the United States, and at the same time, exhibiting to the world a picture, calculated to make the most injurious impressions, with regard to the state of our manners, morals, and religion.

It was believed that the explanations and details of a writer, who appears to have had good opportunities of obtaining information on subjects hitherto not well understood in the United States, might, in some degree, not only account for the perpetual recurrence of these scandalous productions, by developing the views of the writers and their patrons ; but, at the same time, arrest their influence, by showing the impure sources whence they originate. These letters, though not actually written with that express purpose, seem well calculated to do away the impression, which it is the favourite object of this conspiracy against us to create ; to wit, that the freedom of our institutions and government has a direct tendency to

render the people more profligate, unmanageable, and rude, than are the subjects of a limited monarchy; that republicanism and infidelity, licentiousness and freedom, are almost convertible terms, and that they seldom, if ever, are found apart.

A comparison has been drawn between the government of England, its laws and customs, and those of the United States; the corruptions which disgrace every branch of their system are exposed; and the reflections of the writer upon the condition of that people cannot fail, it is thought, to strengthen our attachment to the simplicity and purity of our own republican institutions.

It is proper to state, that the arrangement of these letters is not strictly according to the order of their dates, but rather according to the connexion of the subjects of which they treat. Sometimes, also, several letters have been cast into one, for the sake of collecting and embodying many facts and arguments, dispersed and isolated, all bearing on the same points. The whole has been transcribed in the family of the editor, omitting only such passages as were of a private or personal nature.

ALBANY
JANUARY 1841

A
SKETCH
OF
OLD ENGLAND.

LETTER I.

London.

DEAR BROTHER,

YOUR complaints of the long intervals between my letters, and their silence on certain points concerning which you have requested information, are not altogether unreasonable; neither, in truth, are they altogether reasonable; for after travelling all day, and employing every interval of leisure to visit old castles and stately churches, the one ruined by time and violence, the other preserved by a sentiment of piety or pride, one has little inclination of an evening to describe them. I contented myself with merely noting in my memorandum-book such observations and reflections as seemed worth remembering, with a view to communicate them to you at my leisure.

Being now settled here during the pleasure of the * * * * *, and my present situation allowing both leisure and opportunity, I mean to become the very mirror of letter-writers. But

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B

please to take notice, I eschew old castles, grand cathedrals, and collections of pictures, the price of which would beggar a nation; neither will I take pains to dilate upon the Tower, the Monument, Westminster Bridge, or Westminster Abbey. All these, I presume, are rather familiar to you, having been described upwards of six thousand times: if you are not acquainted with them before this, I shall leave you to the blessings of ignorance.

At your request I will, from time to time, attempt to sketch for your amusement the present situation and future prospects of this renowned country, such as they have appeared to me from a careful study, and pretty extensive opportunities for observation. What I have seen, and the conclusions drawn from experience, I will communicate as well as I can; what I know nothing of, I will say nothing about, believing it to be more honest to appear ignorant, than resort to hearsay or misrepresentation. I shall not "set down aught in malice," but most assuredly I shall "nothing extenuate;" for, certainly, my dear country, and worthy countrymen, have no debts of civility or forbearance to pay to England or to Englishmen. The national pride of this people appears rather founded on a harsh and arrogant contempt for others, than a consciousness produced by internal conviction; and their standard of moral and intellectual excellence seems fixed by the simple expedient of placing every other nation as low as possible in the scale of humanity. They are still exactly what one of their own writers described them more than a hundred years ago:

"No panegyric needs his praise record,
An Englishman ne'er wants his own good word;
And to illustrate first his own good name,
He never fails his neighbour to defame."

Your true-born Englishman, raised and nurtured in the hotbed of homebred conceit, and pampered with his own praises, seems of opinion that a man cannot love his country, without hating and abusing every other. There are few, if any, nations which John Bull has not woefully bespattered with his pen; and when he could not run them through the body with his sword, has fairly knocked them on the head with his great inkhorn, which he always carries at his buttonhole. By this means he has brought himself to a pretty pass, and fortified his self-sufficiency at the price of the open or secret hatred of almost every nation in the world. Neither is there any hope of his mending his manners, for he seems to grow worse and worse, as he grows older, insomuch that had he been an old woman, he would most likely long ere this have been presented by a grand jury of nations, as a common scold.

Previous to this happy age of Holy Leagues, in which the kings of the world have conspired against the people of the world, John Bull vented a principal portion of his spleen against the Pope and the Frenchmen. But for the present little while, the cock and the lion repose together most lovingly, and mutual antipathies have yielded for a moment to mutual fears, not of each other, but of a certain beast of burthen, called the People, which has lately awakened to a sense of insult and oppression. Lord Peter, Martin, and Jack, have also shaken hands, and are as thick as three pickpockets. One might hail this phenomenon as the forerunner of universal toleration, did it not appear too certain, that it is nothing more than another Holy Alliance, more effectually to repress the struggles of freedom. This truce with France and the other nations of Europe, will last till some one of them make a diversion in our favour, by

coming athwart John's interest in some way or other, when he will most likely turn upon it again, and make himself amends for his short forbearance, by a great spring-tide of gall.

In the mean time, this old fellow, who seems to have succeeded to the ill nature of all the various nations of Europe, by whom he has been, from time to time, overrun and conquered, being, as it would appear, greatly at a loss for somebody to abuse, has turned upon the people of the United States, and hired all the scribblers in the land to bespatter them. He was always growling and snarling at us like a cur, who quarrels with another for having a better bone than himself; but lately it has been ten times worse than ever, inso-much, that the world begins to suspect that he has never forgotten or forgiven the various injuries he has done us from time to time. At first, this furious antipathy to the Americans was put down to the score of contempt. Lately, however, it is supposed to have a more reputable origin; and Mr. Thomas Campbell's "Friend" insists it is a compliment to our growing importance in the world, which, it seems, entitles us to the honour of a considerable portion of English scurrility. It may be so; but for my part, I can dispense with my share of the compliment, and not be the more humble for it in my own opinion. True, it is pretty well understood that John's tongue is no scandal; but after all, it is the intension that makes the offence; and it is only great philosophers, like Socrates and ***** that can bear the tongue of Xantippe without being a little ruffled in the tender pin-feathers.

People that assume a great superiority over their neighbours, and speak ill of them on all occasions, get very little for their pains, except a habit of arrogant self-sufficiency that poorly supplies

the place of other men's love and respect. They also are sure to invite a severe, and not altogether impartial scrutiny; and if their claims be not entirely unquestionable, they will sooner or later be dragged from their self-asserted superiority, and placed even below the level of their just pretensions. Americans who have hitherto visited this England, and attempted a picture, have generally indulged their early habits of acquiescing in the superiority of every thing here, animate and inanimate, moral, political, and intellectual. Instead of viewing things as they really were, they too often substituted their early fancies for sober realities, and gave to their countrymen a poetical, rather than a true delineation of England. Those, especially, who wrote with a view to publishing their observations, seem to have stood more in awe of the British critics than the Lord of Truth; and, I apprehend, not unfrequently sacrificed their honest impressions to purchase, if not praise, at least toleration, on this side of the water. Hence, they have contributed to the continuance of a delusion which they ought to have chased from the minds of their countrymen; a delusion which equally tends to nourish a degrading feeling of inferiority on our part, and an offensive arrogance on the part of this people.

The English are great jokers, but they are the worst people in the world to bear a joke. They pretend to despise us and our opinions, but they cannot endure we should despise them in turn. You can scarcely have an idea how they winced under Mr. Walsh's excellent "Appeal," which, in truth, has had a much better effect here than all the miserable adulation lavished upon England and her institutions by all our statesmen, orators, historians, poets, and patriots. It has done more than all our acquiescence,

or poor attempts at conciliating the favour of fashionable Reviewers. It cut the deeper too, as coming from a man who was acknowledged abroad and at home, as one of the ablest writers. I assure you it was meat and drink, washing and lodging to me, to witness John Bull's astonishment at seeing his mighty reviewers taken by the beard. He rubbed his eyes like one just awakened from a delightful dream, and ran about asking every body if he was quite so bad as some people thought him. The work was also excessively relished abroad, particularly in France, where it was extensively circulated; for the truth is, Mr. Bull is no great favourite, notwithstanding his disinterested exertions for the liberties of Europe. He is apt to confer his favours with such a confounded ill grace, that people who are obliged to accept them, are more sensible of his arrogance, than of his benefits. The nations of Europe, for this reason, always laugh in their sleeves whenever the Americans get the better of him in any manner whatever.

Be this as it may, my dear brother, it seems to me that our admiration of English government, English institutions, English genius, and English every thing else, will eventually harness us in the trammels of a servile imitation, that will not only fetter the genius of America, but lead to the commission of political errors, fatal in the end to our freedom and happiness. Perhaps one of the most effectual means of shaking this intellectual domination, would be to satisfy our good people that all Englishmen are neither Shakspeares and Miltons in poetry, nor Lockes and Bacons in philosophy, nor Newtons in science; that the general standard of intellect, acquirements, and virtue, is not higher here than in other civilized nations; and that the present race, whatever their forefathers may have been, have passed away, if it ever were

possessed, the sceptre of moral and intellectual supremacy over our native country. A few illustrious examples of genius and virtue do not ennoble the whole rabble of a nation ; and although they constitute just objects of national pride, they do not certainly offer fair samples either of the state of mind or morals in any age or country. But John Bull is perpetually boasting, and our countrymen perpetually believe, that he himself is nothing less than a Shakspeare in genius, a Locke in Philosophy, a Newton in science, and a saint in morality, although, so far as my experience goes, he is occasionally a great rogue, sometimes a great block-head, and always a great boaster. He seems, in truth, to have forgotten that those who play at bowls, even with inferior players, may sometimes meet with rubbers ; and like most people given to boasting and taking liberties with their neighbours, is exceedingly disquieted when they take liberties in turn. He puts me in mind of our old schoolmaster, who allowed his boys to joke with him so long as he kept the laugh on his side, but always fell into a great passion, and hoisted them as soon as the joke went against him.

I permit you to allow your worthy neighbour, and my old friend, the member from *****, to read my letters, if he will take the trouble. Knowing me from my youth upwards, when I have so often been dandled on his old linsey woolsey knee, and that I am incapable of misrepresenting a whole people, I am not without hope, that he will yet open his eyes to the vast difference between England as it was, and England as it is. He himself is not more altered within the last sixty years than this country. The pictures given in history no longer represent her as she is ; and he who should attempt to delineate her present features from his impressions of the past, would de-

ceive us quite as much as he who should point to the curly pate and ruddy cheeks of the youthful picture over your mantle-piece, and call it a likeness of our good old neighbour. He knows perfectly well, that however I may abhor the policy and maxims of the government, the people themselves have ever been objects of my respect and regard. If there ever were a nation that might justly point to the wastefulness and corruptions of its rulers, in excuse for its own, it is this of England. When, therefore, as the truth will compel me to do, I am fair to admit, that a very large proportion of ignorance, vice, and poverty prevails among them, and that in their actually existing state, they are not exactly fitted for the task of self-government, I trust that neither you nor he will accuse me of prejudice or hostility. It requires ages of bad government to render a people incapable and unworthy the enjoyment of rational liberty; and we cannot expect them to be regenerated, like a methodist convert, in one night. It is no just argument against the struggles of a people for freedom, that they are not just at the moment fitted for its enjoyment. All salutary changes are the gradual production of time and experience; and a people struggling for their rights, will, in that very struggle, acquire the ideas and habits necessary to their enjoyment. A long system of oppression will render any people ignorant, desperate, and brutal, in some degree; but to say that because they are so, they must continue to submit to the system which brought about their degradation, is to argue in favour of the eternal duration of every bad government, and the everlasting ignorance and barbarity which are its natural results.

I am now comfortably and quietly settled in lodgings, with an elderly lady, who has good blood

in her veins, that is to say, if blood be an hereditary commodity, which some people doubt, but which I do not, for there are diseases bodily and mental in most of the old families here that have descended through half a score of generations. She claims descent from Tudors and Plantagenets to boot, and combines the conflicting claims of both York and Lancaster. Though too well bred to boast, she sometimes used to mention these matters; until one day, I advised her in jest, to procure a champion to tilt against young parson Dymoke for the broom at the ensuing coronation, since her claim was far superior to the Hanoverian upstarts. The good old soul took the joke ill, and I was sorry for it. What right had I to ridicule that which to her was an innocent source of happiness? I despise the cant of sentiment, but I promise never to do so again.

She has a number of noble relatives among the respectable, old-fashioned nobility, who still possess some of that sturdy, antique morality and honesty, now so scarce among this class throughout all Christendom. Their occasional visits in the dusk of the evening, and the contemplation of her own august descent, seem to constitute her little fund of worldly enjoyment. It is so blameless, that I humour her by often inquiring the names of her visitors; which gives occasion to a variety of family details and claims of kindred, distant enough to be sure, but still sufficient to support the little edifice of vanity, erected in her heart upon the tombs of her ancestors. The old matron is excessively methodical, and particularly neat in her dress—hates Napoleon Bonaparte with a zeal past all human understanding, and has brought to war against him most exclusively several passages of the Old and New Testaments. To do her justice, however, she has no great respect

for her present liege-lord; but whether on the score of his morals, or her own superior claim to the crown, I cannot decide. The queen she adheres to, I believe merely from the spirit of the sex.

Comfort, neatness, and economy distinguish her household, from the cellar to the garret. Nothing is wasted, nothing is wanting. Such, indeed, is her economy, that I verily believe she never throws away a pin for want of a head, or a needle for being without an eye. This economy is neither the offspring of meanness nor avarice, but the rational result of a determination to preserve her independence. Her means are just sufficient, with this rigid economy, to enable her to appear with that sober sort of gentility, which it is her pride and delight ever to exhibit. Were she to relax in any one respect, the nice system would lose its balance and fall to the ground. To sum up all, she is so perfectly upright in all her dealings, that, I am satisfied, no prospect of impunity, no certainty of escaping discovery or suspicion, would tempt her to defraud the living or the dead, or receive more than her due. It is amusing to see her uneasiness at incurring the slightest obligation, or being subjected to the smallest debt. I happened to pay the postage of a letter for her one day in her absence, and she was quite unhappy because I could not make change, and release her from the obligation. She and I are great friends after the *cold English fashion*. If I be sick, every attention is scrupulously paid, but paid as if from a sense of propriety, not from the heart. Our occasional conversations are friendly, but formal; rather genealogical I confess, but let that pass—the old lady comes from Wales. Still I cannot help respecting her most sincerely, and I feel more at home in her

house than any place where I have sojourned since I left my own home. I have been the more particular in my sketch, because she belongs to a class of females which once gave a character to England, and to English domestic life, of which the country yet feels the benefit, in the enjoyment of a reputation for integrity, founded on the past, rather than the present. It was this homely honesty, this inflexible regard to principle, which made amends for the absence of those easy and sprightly manners, which attach a stranger, who is generally more in want of courtesies than benefits, and consequently forms his estimate of a people, from their general deportment, rather than from any particular act of kindness. This class is, however, I regret to say, daily mouldering away amidst the speculating extravagance, and splendid pauperism of the times. They cannot keep pace with the more numerous class of nobility and gentry, because their pride will not stoop to an alliance with vulgar wealth, nor their principles bend to earn the rewards of the government by the sacrifice of their integrity.

Our house is situated in one of the old streets, running into *****, which, though rather narrow, was considered quite genteel until lately, that a corrector of enormities in beards made a lodgment directly over the way, and poked his pole at an angle of some forty degrees, almost into the old lady's window. This awful invasion put to flight two persons of quality who lodged in the house. "Tis an ill wind that blows nobody good," and I was wafted by this breeze into lodgings that suit me exactly.

Adieu.

LETTER II.

London.

DEAR BROTHER,

THE capital of a nation may be considered in the light of the head and face of the human frame, which are supposed, by craniologists and physiognomists, to indicate the character of the individual. Having now been settled here some twelve months, and played the busy, inquisitive traveller all the time, I shall commence my promised picture of John Bull, by beginning with his head. Before I proceed, however, I must beg permission of your patience to make a few preliminary observations.

Strangers in every country always see the worst of it. Wherever we go, it will be found that the characters and the virtues of a people are best seen and most clearly developed at the domestic fire-side, where, in this country, strangers are rarely admitted. If they should be, however, they seldom become sufficiently intimate to form a just estimate of character, because the faults and the foibles of mankind are always more apt to strike our attention, than their virtues. Nothing therefore can be more unjust, than for a stranger to condemn a country on his first arrival, because he is cheated by a hackney coachman, or imposed upon by his landlord. Such has, however, been the criterion by which British travellers have judg-

ed of our country, and such indeed seems to be the habit of most of those worthy persons who go about the world libelling the characters of whole nations under the mask of a book of travels.

Of this pitiful propensity I shall endeavour to divest myself as much as possible. Without omitting to record those little incidents which throw light on character and manners, I shall leave you occasionally to draw your own conclusions, bearing in mind that the two-legged wild beasts of great cities, as they have greater temptations and greater opportunities for the commission of crimes, are apt to be more vicious, when they incline to vice, than when placed in a different situation. Whether the same may be said of their virtuous propensities, I am somewhat inclined to doubt, although by no means prepared to give into the philosophical denunciations against large societies.

I invaded London under cover of a great fog, somewhat similar to that recorded on New-Year's eve in 1730, when, it is stated, that many persons fell into Fleet-ditch, and several prominent noses sustained serious damage by coming in contact with each other. Among the few objects I could see, was a person with a lantern, who, I suppose, like *Æsop*, was looking about for an honest man. You may think, my dear brother, how scarce honest men must be in London. Alighting from the stage, there was a great contest for the privilege of carrying my trunks, like that of the Greeks and Trojans for the body of *Patroclus*. In conclusion, the *Greek* carried the day, as I found, for a good-natured person apprised me, that if I permitted their attendance, I should probably never see my trunks again. I was not aware of the necessity of this caution, as you know in our own dear honest country, no man hesitates a moment to trust his

baggage with the first porter that offers, be he black or white. This is not one of those solitary instances from which no general conclusions can be drawn. It furnishes decisive proof, that at least one class of people of this country is not as honest as the same class in ours.

To escape the hacks I called a hack, and by that means fell 'out of the frying-pan into the fire;' that is, if rushing upon a positive evil to escape a probable one, will justify the old proverb. He charged me three times the amount of his fare, and gave me a few bad shillings in change. These bad shillings are, in truth, as common as counterfeit notes are in our country, and strangers should be equally aware of them. Well, he drove me to the * * * * * coffee-house, the name of which, being derived from my own country, attracted the yearnings of my inclination. Here the master of the house very soon satisfied me I had been cheated. But as hackney-coachmen are for the most part rogues in grain, all over the world, new and old, I determined, in my own mind, to let John Bull off that time, and not denounce him on the score of this universal characteristic of a particular species of men.

The master of the house advised me to buy a Picture of London, which I did, and very much consolation did it afford me. Among the first choice passages I fell upon, were the following: "Any man who saunters about London, with pockets on the outside of his coat, or who mixes in crowds without especial care of his pockets, *deserves no pity on account of the losses he may sustain.*" Again: "Persons should be very particular as soon as they have called a hackney-coach, to observe the number, before they get into it. This precaution guards against imposition, or unforeseen accidents. There is no other method of

punishing coachmen who misbehave, nor chance of recovering property carelessly left in the coach, but by the recollection of the number." Now, brother, I could not come within a thousand of the number of my coach, for I had no idea of being cheated by a hackney-coachman in this honest country.

For the benefit of any of your honest neighbours, who may chance to visit this city, and be cheated before they can get a "Picture of London," I will extract one or two more passages from that valuable work :

"One of the most dangerous classes of swindlers are those pretended porters or clerks, who attend about the doors of inns, at the time the coaches are unloading; or who watch the arrival of post-chaises at the doors of the coffee-houses. These fellows, by various artifices, frequently obtain possession of the luggage of a traveller, who has occasion to lament the want of suspicion, in the loss of his clothes and other effects."

"Mock auctions, in which plated goods are sold for silver, and a variety of incredible frauds practised upon the unwary, ought to be cautiously avoided. They may be in general known by a person being placed at the door to invite in the passing stranger."

"Strangers having business at Doctors' Commons, should previously know the address of a proctor, as all the avenues are beset by *inferior clerks or porters*, who watch and accost strangers, whom they take into some office, where they are paid in proportion to the nature of the business, which is conducted not in the most respectable way, and never without extra charges, unwarranted by the profession."

"In asking questions, or inquiring the way, it is necessary always to apply at a shop, or a public-

house, and never to rely upon the information which may be given by persons in the streets."

Such, brother, are a few of the dangers which beset the traveller, in his adventurous pilgrimage through this wilderness of two-legged beasts of prey. One cannot help, if ever so little inclined, drawing conclusions favourable to the state of morals at home in our cities, when the fact is known, that none of these refined modes of swindling have as yet become naturalized in our new world. I imagine the cold, distant, suspicious demeanor, which Englishmen maintain towards each other in general originates, not more in a frigid stupidity, than in an experience of the danger which results from that confidence, which may be placed in our fellow-creatures elsewhere, without so much hazard. When two tolerably intimate friends, of half a dozen years' standing, see each other coming from opposite directions, the first thing they do is to look all about to see if they cannot avoid meeting, without the appearance of a "dead cut," by turning a corner, crossing the street, or admiring the caricatures in a print-shop. If all these expedients be beyond their reach, they crawl up to each other like two land tortoises, and perhaps offer a dead hand to shake. Then they commence a most capital colloquy about the weather, &c.

"Fine day!"

"Very—(um.)"

"Any news to-day?"

"Can't tell."

"Wife well?"

"Tolerable—thank ye."

"Fine day—how's Betsey?"

"Middling."

"How is John?"

"So—so."

"Aunt and uncle pretty well?"

"Indifferent, thank ye. How is your wife?"

"Complaining a little, thank ye."

"Old gentleman well?"

"I can't say he is."

"Very fine weather!"

"Delightful."

By this time they have reached the end of their rope of ideas, and stand yawning in the faces of each other, till with a sudden effort of vivacity, they shake hands again, exclaiming, "Well, I'm very glad to see you—good-bye." It would do your heart good to see the cordiality with which they quit each other, and shoot off, as if a bailiff were at their heels. Such, indeed, is the coldness of the social feelings in Londoners, and the want of common chit-chat among them, that they never seem glad to see each other, except just when about bidding farewell. It is quite amusing to see the trepidation of a genuine cockney, on receiving a common-place civility, from a stranger in a stage-coach or steam-boat. He directly imagines you are going to pick his pocket. Strangers in town should be shy of accepting offers of courtesy, for such is the coldness of English manners, that any ordinary civility, from one you do not know, is generally the prelude to imposition of some kind or other. One of the clearest indications of the state of society here, is, that every body locks the street-doors during the day-time.

My experience at Liverpool and elsewhere having taught me somewhat, I began to smell a rat, almost the first moment I entered the coffee-house. The waiters were excessively officious, and so anxious to put themselves in my way, when there was no occasion, that I was quite out of patience. The master of the house too, a most important little busy body, made me bow upon

bow, all which being contrary to the very nature of an Englishman, I took it for granted that he meant to cheat me. Accordingly the first day at dinner, he gave me a bottle of half-guinea wine, of the most pestiferous quality, which he pronounced such as Lord Somebody always called for at his house. The next day he gave me still worse, finding I put up with the first, and charged me still higher, on the score of its being a favourite wine of some noble Earl. The third day it was still worse and still dearer, because his Grace of ***** always drank it in preference to any other. Thinking it best to get out of the way, before mine host came to the king's favourite wine, which, according to the preceding steps of the climax, must have been execrable, I got a friend to recommend me to another lodging, who accordingly negotiated the terms, and stood security for my character with the excellent lady, with whom I still remain. On leaving the coffee-house, I was beset by the whole clan of domestics, from the head-waiter in broadcloth to *boots* in dirt. The landlord made me a sort of half bow, and I complimented him on his Grace's favourite wine, and thus we parted, never, never, never, to meet again, as your sentimental letter-writers say.

The city of London, as appears from the "Picture," from which I have just now quoted, and which is just as good authority as Stow, Strype, or Maitland, was founded by the Goths, who emigrated from Scandinavia, which, in some measure, excuses the Gothic want of politeness observed here. To begin with its etymology; the term "*Lux*" signified a *grove*, and "*Den*" a *town*—I suppose, from the town being but a den of thieves. London, therefore, signifies a *town* in the *woods*. It is about sixty miles from the ocean,—its greatest length seven, and its greatest breadth four miles.

The number of its churches, chapels, &c. is upwards of four hundred, of which something *above one half* are not of the established religion. In general, it may be observed, that the churches are placed in the least conspicuous situations, being often quite hid from view in passing the streets, a sign they were built before it became the fashion to make an ostentatious display of religion in England. But of the public buildings you will get a full account from the books I send you.

The government of the city is in the hands of the Lord-mayor, the *Portgerefa* of the Saxons, and the *Baillions* of the Normans, a common council of twenty-five aldermen, and two hundred and thirty-six members; the former chosen for life, the latter annually by the householders, who are freemen. In the words of an old author,—“The authority of the lord-mayor reaches not only over this great city, and part of the suburbs, but also on the famous river of Thames. Eastward as far as Tendall or Tenleet, and the mouth of the Medway; and westward as far as Colney Ditch above Staine’s Bridge. He hath a privilege by charter to hunt in Middlesex, Essex, and Surrey; and for this purpose is always maintained a kennel of hounds as aforementioned. He hath power to punish or correct all that shall annoy the stream, banks, or fish; and for that end he yearly keeps several courts in the counties adjacent to the Thames for conservation of the river, and punishment of offenders.”

“The court of common council,” continues the authority I cite, “(as the parliament of Great Britain,) consisting of two houses; one of the lord-mayor and aldermen, and the other of the commoners; in which courts are made all the by-laws which bind all the citizens of London: for every man, either by himself or his represen-

tative, gives his assent thereunto." This is a mistake ; the right of suffrage being by no means general in London. As the common council has, however, been almost invariably opposed to the extension of the king's prerogative, it is to be inferred, that the elections are sufficiently popular to secure the rights of the citizens.

The same author gives the following description of the lord-mayor's appearance in public : " His state and magnificence are remarkable when he appears abroad, which in former times was mostly on horseback, with rich caparison, himself always in long robes, sometimes of scarlet cloth richly furred, and sometimes purple, and over his robes a hood of black velvet, which some say is the badge of a Baron of the realm, with a great chain about his neck or collar of gold, with a great rich jewel pendent thereon, with many officers walking before, and on all sides of him. But when he goes to Westminster in his barge, accompanied by all the aldermen, all his officers, all the several companies or corporations in their several stately barges, with their arms, colours, and streamers ; and having there in the exchequer chamber taken his solemn oath to be true to the king, returns in like manner to the hall of his own company, or to Guildhall, where is prepared for him and his brethren a most sumptuous dinner, to which many of the great lords and ladies, all the judges of the land, and oftentimes lords of His Majesty's most honourable privy council, also foreign ambassadors are invited ; and our kings and queens have often been pleased to honour the feast with their presence. This great magistrate, upon the death of the king, is said to be prime person of England ; and therefore, when King James the First was invited to come and take possession of the crown of England, Robert Lee,

then Lord Mayor of London, subscribed in the first place before all the great officers of the crown, and all the nobility."

Our author goes on to enlarge upon the excellent table of the Lord Mayor, whereat four kings were at one time seated right loyally and lustily. Indeed it appears from a very early period in the history of London, the worshipful mayor and aldermen were famous for good living. In 1543, "it was ordained that the Mayor should confine himself to seven, aldermen and sheriffs to six, and the sword-bearer to four, dishes at dinner or supper," under penalty of forty shillings for every offending dish. The tradesmen of London are divided into twelve companies, who are bodies corporate. King William was a member of the Drapers' Company; and another of the kings of England, whose name I forget, was a member of the Grocers'.

The physiognomy of London is by no means inviting, especially that part which was laid out, and built, before the nobility and the rich took it into their wise heads to spend their incomes in town, rather than among their tenants in the country. In some of the new and fashionable squares the buildings are sufficiently aristocratic; but with here and there an exception, the houses bear the stamp of something like republicanism or equality. In general, they are quite comfortable in appearance, but nothing more. The greater proportion of fine buildings is the offspring of public spirit, which certainly, at times, has produced as great wonders in England as in any other part of the world. The merchants, the companies of artisans, indeed almost all classes of people, except the nobility, have vied with each other in public works, either of splendour or utility, or generally both combined. The nobility have contented themselves with building palaces for their own

private use. It may be said, perhaps, that vanity must have its gratification in some way or other, and that those who cannot build a palace individually, must compound by doing it in company with others, and making a general rather than an individual property. It may be so, but still the public is a gainer by the latter plan, since we can go into some of these for nothing, whereas the palaces are only shown for money.

One thing that has disgusted me most in this city, is the incredible quantity of wretched and profligate beggars who infest many parts, whose ragged, filthy, and debauched appearance turns pity into absolute disgust. I was, the other day, admiring the magnificence of a new palace in one of the fine squares, with my head full of the splendours of this people, when all at once my visions of glory were put to flight by the irruption of a family of most wretched beings of all ages, from the gray-headed parent to the little infant holding by the mother's hand. Their story was that of thousands, nay, hundreds of thousands, in this government-ridden nation: want of employment and want of food. If true, it proved how much they were to be pitied; if false, how yet much more they were to be pitied. If necessity drove them to this wretched mode of life, they might still derive some consolation from within;—if choice, then were they wretched indeed. The splendours of the palace vanished like those of the wicked enchanters of old, and little else remained on my mind but the impression that its walls were reared upon the miseries of thousands of such as were now begging at the door.

To an American, whose feelings are not yet quite blunted by their perpetual occurrence, such scenes are apt to destroy every pleasing illusion arising from the splendours of the monarch and his noble dependants. No man of reflection,

whose interests are not connected with the maintenance of this monstrous inequality of wealth, which is not the reward of labour, or industry, or exertion, as in our country, can shut his eyes to the melancholy truth, that this overgrown wealth, this outward splendour, this wasteful extravagance, in a few, is balanced, and a thousand times over-balanced, by the dependance, the poverty, the sufferings, and the degradation of millions of men like themselves. The elegancies of life, the refinement, as it is called, of manners, the perfection of the arts, the embellishments of architecture, painting, and sculpture, the loftiest flights of poetry, and the deepest investigations of philosophy, beautiful and glorious as they are, are too dearly purchased at the expense of the sacrifice of happiness to the many. It is better to be without all these, than that the lower orders should want bread.

Another bad feature in the physiognomy of London, is the number and the profligacy of certain ladies, anciently called the *Bishop of Winchester's Geese*. Their effrontery, their shocking depravity, disgusting indecency, and total destitution of every female characteristic, are horrible. Indeed, brother, every species of vice is displayed here in its naked deformity, and with a broad and vulgar grossness, that renders London a complete contrast to Paris, at least in outward appearance.

To conclude: London contains, beyond doubt, above a million of inhabitants, among whom, to speak my mind plainly, there are too many rogues. The ordinaries are full of cheats; some citizens are bankrupts, and many gentlemen beggars. A worthy magistrate, Mr. Mainwaring, not long ago asserted in print, that there were upwards of five thousand persons in London, who would murder you with only a remote prospect of gaining a shilling.

LETTER III.

London.

DEAR BROTHER,

BEFORE I set about giving you the results of my general observations on this country and people, I may as well sketch, from my memorandum-book, the outlines of the tours I made from London, after first delivering my credentials to * * * * *, and previously to my final settlement here. As I observed to you in my first letter, I do not mean to trouble you with a relation of all I saw, nor with descriptions of any particular places or buildings, unless they be distinguished by something besides their names. Your general reading, and, in fact, the general reading of all our reading countrymen, has already given them more information concerning this country, than the people themselves possess. Nothing, indeed, can equal their ignorance of every thing that is not directly under their nose, and most especially their ignorance of our country, which is truly profound. With the description of old castles, and the genealogies of their present or former occupants, I shall not trouble you, except in a few instances where they are connected with circumstances not generally recorded, or characters renowned in history or tradition. Occasionally I may renew more vividly the recollection of my impressions on beholding some particular scenes of more than ordinary

beauty ; or which are hallowed, either as the former residence of some sage or poet, who has made them illustrious by association or description. The first thing almost that strikes an American, used to the clear skies and glowing sunshine of his own country, is the humidity of the atmosphere, and the frequent absences of the god of day. St. Simon and Jude's day is almost every other day here. It rains or snows about one hundred and fifty days in the year ; and of the remainder, between fifty and sixty are cloudy. The result is, that the verdure of the country is excessively luxuriant, although, to my mind, the landscapes rather weep than laugh. The grass and the foliage are so deadly green, that they almost look blue, and resemble the effect of distance, which, you know, communicates a bluish tint to the landscape. But the grass grows and the cattle get fat, and the roast beef of Old England is the better for it undoubtedly. To me, however, who you know loves the sunshine like a terrapin, there is something chilly and ungenial in the English summer, and it offends me hugely, to hear a fat, puffing, beer-drinking fellow, bawling out to his neighbour, " A fine day," when the sun looks as if it might verify the theory of one of the old Greeks, that it was nothing more than a great round ball of copper. Whether this melancholy character in the climate, or the practice of drinking beer in such enormous quantities, or both combined, have given that peculiar cast of bluff and gruff stupidity, observable in the common people of England, I cannot say ; but certainly, if " a man who drinks beer thinks beer," the question is decided at once.

To describe, or even to name, all the villages and seats which I passed, in going out of London at different times, is a task I shall not undertake,

and which indeed can only be done by a person with more time on his hands than he knows what to do with, and more patience than time. To make you amends for many omissions of this kind, I will mention one, the vestiges of which only remain, and that because it is connected with the name of our favourite Pope. It is Canons, once the consummation of all human grandeur; built by a Duke of Chandos, a friend, and as it is said, a benefactor of the bard, who, it is also said, repaid him by a picture of his palace, under the name of "Timon's Villa," which we have often admired together, as a most capital delineation of wasteful and tasteless extravagance. I remember only the last lines. After describing all the monstrosities, the gilded follies, the purse-proud owner, &c. he says,

"Yet hence the poor are cloth'd, the hungry fed;
Health to himself, and to his infants bread,
The labourer bears: what his hard heart denies
His charitable vanity supplies.
Another age shall see the golden ear
Imbrown the slope, and nod on the parterre;
Deep harvests bury all his pride has plann'd,
And laughing Ceres re-assume the land."

The prediction was soon fulfilled. The palace was sold, and purchased by a cabinet-maker, who pulled it down, disposed of a part of the materials, and with the remainder built a pretty villa, which still remains. The gossiping taste of the times has been gratified with the important information that this same cabinet-maker's grandson has since bought out two other old families, each of which had been upwards of two hundred years in possession. "Thus we see how the world wags," my brother—

"We Cits are ambitious to make our sons gentlemen;
In three generations they return again;
We for our children purchase land: they leave it
In the country, beget children, and they sell,
Grow poor, and send their sons up to be 'prentices:—
Such is the whirl of fate."

These instances occur frequently here, in spite of every thing. The laws of God are stronger than the laws of man; and not all the regulations of human policy can prevent industry and economy from inheriting some of the wastings of idleness and extravagance.

Pope, who somehow or other has had his memory assailed more frequently than almost any other English bard, has been accused of ingratitude towards the Duke of Chandos, whose good-natured friends applied the picture of Timon and his villa to him, although there is no allusion but might have suited almost every ostentatious fool in England.

Another noted place near London is Islington, very pleasantly situated, which deserves to be mentioned as the scene of Goldsmith's excellent *Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog*; as well as for having once been a favourite place with Queen Bess, who used to take the air in that quarter. As early as that period, London and its neighbourhood, it seems, abounded in beggars. Her Majesty, it is recorded, was so annoyed at their flocking around her, that she sent to his worship the Lord Mayor, who turned out, and took up, in one day, eighty-four of these rogues, "whereof some were blind, and yet great usurers and very rich."

Richmond Hill and village, with Twickenham on the opposite side of the Thames, about ten or twelve miles from London, is all classic ground, and worthy to be so. It is, to my mind, the most charming scenery in the *old* world. What makes it the more agreeable to my eye is, that there is plenty of wood, which is wanting in most of the English landscapes, except about the great forests. What with their smooth lawns and trim hedges, the landscapes put one in mind of a well shaven beard. But what gives the charm to these scenes

is, that they are connected with the shades of Pope and Thomson. The latter lies buried in Richmond church; and thither I went on a pilgrimage, the least a man can do in gratitude for the many hours his genius has embellished and consecrated to pure and innocent enjoyment.

Until the year 1792, there was no inscription over his grave, which is in the north-easterly corner of the church. The Earl of Buchan, Washington's old correspondent, at that time placed over it, against the wall, a brass plate with this inscription:

"In the earth beneath this tablet, are the remains of James Thomson, author of the beautiful poems of the Seasons, the Castle of Indolence, &c. &c. who died at Richmond on the 27th day of August, and was buried on the 29th, O. S. 1748. The Earl of Buchan, unwilling so good a man and so admirable a poet should be without a memorial, has denoted the place of his interment for the satisfaction of his admirers, in the year of our Lord 1792."

But such memorials are rather benefits bestowed upon the giver, than the receiver. No one will ever want a memorial of Thomson, whose Seasons will continue while those he has painted shall roll on their course, and men can read, and relish nature and truth. But for this memorial, it might, however, have been speedily forgotten that such a man as my Lord of Buchan ever existed.

I afterwards visited a house called Rosedale, where the poet resided, and wrote the Seasons, and where many reliques are still preserved. I was particularly struck with a little, round, old-fashioned table, on which he was accustomed to write, and which excited my reverence infinitely more than Arthur's Round Table, which I afterwards saw at Winchester. There are also two

brass hooks, where he always hung his hat and cane, for he was a man of habits, and seldom deviated from them. In the garden was his favourite haunt, a summer-house, overshadowed with luxurious vines. Solitude and solitary rambling constituted the pleasures of Thomson; and it was doubtless from these habits of walking alone, observing all the latent, and inherent, and even-accidental charms of nature, and reflecting upon them as he rambled along, that he was enabled to combine natural and moral beauties so delightfully in his pictures. I wish he had been buried somewhere in the fields, where the grass and the flowers might have sprung on his grave, and realized the inimitable beauty of the verses of Collins to his memory—

“ In yonder grave a druid lies,
Where slowly winds the stealing wave;
The year's best fruits shall duteous rise
To deck their Poet's sylvan grave.”

Twickenham, where Pope's villa once was, is a village opposite Greenwich, to which you pass by a bridge. The house which the poet inhabited is pulled down, but the famous grotto remains, a pretty and fantastic monument of expensive folly. Pope had better held his tongue about “Timon's villa,” and its fripperies; for, to my taste, this grotto is totally unworthy of any reputable nymphs of either wood or water. It is neither splendid by art, nor magnificent, nor solemn by nature, and is, in truth, an excellent place for keeping milk and butter cool. I felt no reverence whatever for it, and heartily wished the grotto, rather than the house, had been destroyed.

Perhaps I am singular; but though I am one of Pope's greatest admirers, and think him in many, very many respects, unequalled, as well as inimi-

table, his name, some how or other, does not carry with it those warm and affecting feelings of admiration, as well as regret, which are conjured up by the recollection of many other bards. It is true, he was rich, and was cherished by the great, and lived all his days in sunshine. He reaped, during his life, that fame, as well as fortune, the one of which few poets receive till after death, and the other most want while alive. There was nothing in his whole life either romantic or affecting, nothing to call forth sympathy. But these circumstances, of themselves, are not sufficient to account for my want of enthusiasm at visiting the spot where he lived, wrote, and died.

I am afraid it was because he possessed no enthusiasm himself. His genius was not allied either to romance, or to profound feeling, and therefore seldom excites either romantic enthusiasm or deep emotions. He is the poet of human life and human manners; the poet of reason, refinement, and philosophy. He has communicated the charms of poetry to the abstract ideas of philosophers, as well as to the every-day actions and passions of practical men. He rather, therefore, delights the ear and the understanding, and seldom conjures up those ideal, exaggerated, yet sublime and awful spectres that people the empire of obscurity and imagination. It is for these reasons, probably, combined with the causes before mentioned, that Twickenham and Pope's grotto do not elevate the heart with those affecting, yet lofty emotions, that arise from contemplating the little round table, and the vine-covered summer-house, of the author of *Liberty*, the *Seasons*, and the *Castle of Indolence*. Pope is the poet of those who reason rather than feel; the poet of the understanding, and of men past the age of romantic delusions: Thomson is

the poet of youth, nature, and an uncorrupted heart. The one is a man of the world, the other a druid of the woods, and melancholy streams, the beautiful and sublime of nature. In fine, Pope dealt too much in satire ever to be greatly beloved; for genius, however it may excite our admiration, cannot touch the heart, but through the medium of the softer affections. I wonder now, my dear brother, if these dreaming poets ever dreamed that men from afar off, from a new world, which they, perhaps, seldom thought of, would visit their shrines, with such feelings as the shrines of kings never inspire. If sometimes such an emotion arose in their minds, would it not repay them for all the evils of poverty, neglect, and health worn out in the pursuit of bread or glory? I think it might, and I hope it is so; for otherwise, unless the divinity that is within them whisper a promise, nay, inspire a conviction of future eminence, I cannot see what could support them under the evils of penury, the stings of neglect, and disappointed hopes. The ardour of genius, perhaps, penetrates into futurity, and sees that in the distance which the present denies, and seeing, is rewarded for its cares and exertions; somewhat like suffering virtue, when it looks to hereafter for its blissful immortality. I do not know any thing more affecting than a passage in Fielding's *Tom Jones*, which is recalled to my mind by these speculations. He was always poor, and in his latter days a martyr to disease, slow, yet sure in its progress. It was, perhaps, while tasting in advance the immortality he has since attained that he broke out into the following invocation:

"Come, bright love of fame, inspire my glowing breast! Not thee I call, who over swelling tides of blood and tears dost bear the hero on to glory, while sighs of millions waft his swelling

sails; but thee, fair, gentle maid, whom Mnesis, happy nymph, first on the banks of Hebrus did produce; thee, whom Mæonia educated, whom Mantua charmed, and who, on that fair hill, which overlooks the proud metropolis of Britain, satest with thy Milton tuning the heroic lyre—fill my ravished fancy with the hope of charming ages yet to come. Foretell me that some tender maid, whose grandmother is yet unborn, hereafter, when, under the fictitious name of Sophia, she reads the real worth that once existed in my Charlotte, shall, from her sympathetic breast, send forth the heaving sigh! Do thou teach me not only to foresee, but feed on future praise! *Comfort me by a solemn assurance, that when the little parlour in which I sit at this instant, shall be reduced to a worse-furnished box, I shall be read with honour, by those who never knew or saw me, and whom I shall never see or know.*"

The man who could dream, and dream truly too, could not be miserable even amid the neglect of fortune and the scorn of fools. This secret consciousness is the staff which supports and rewards genius in its weary pilgrimage.

LETTER IV.

London.

DEAR BROTHER,

I SHALL go on with the continuation of my last letter, without attempting the regularity of a journal, noting only such things, as I find recorded in my memorandum-book. My notes are in truth not very copious, nor very interesting, but they may serve to amuse you, perhaps, when you have nothing better.

In the neighbourhood of Greenwich, I was attracted by the appearance of a grand house, which, upon inquiry, I learned was built by a noted brewer of that village. This monument of the inveterate beer-drinking propensity of the nation, is one of the largest private dwellings I have seen in this country. The story went, that it was finally devised to an Oxfordshire baronet, who, not dealing in beer, could not afford to keep up the establishment. He accordingly sold every thing about it but the walls, and here it stands ready for the next portly brewer, who shall be smitten with the desire of building up a name in stone and mortar. The labours and the parsimony of years are very often employed in this manner, by the rich tradesmen of London, whose estates, not being in general entailed, like those of the nobility and gentry, are for the most part divided in such

a manner, that not one of the heirs can afford to live in the great house. It is therefore either sold out of the family, or its deserted walls remain as a monument of ostentatious folly.

I also reconnoitred Osterley house, which attracted my notice, not so much for its magnificence, as its history. Every schoolboy has heard of Sir Thomas Graham, the great merchant, who built the Royal Exchange, and gave such grand entertainments to Queen Elizabeth, who loved nothing better than feasting at the expense of other people. The basement story of the Exchange consisted of shops, which are frequently alluded to in the old dramatic and satirical writers, as resorts for dissipated and idle young rakes of fashion, who went thither to smoke tobacco, run into debt for fashionable finery, and pay for it by running away to the New World, or cruising against the Spaniards. There is an old story, that Elizabeth, being at a great entertainment at Osterley, found fault with the court, as being too large, and gave her opinion, that it would look better divided in two parts. Sir Thomas, like another Aladdin, but by means of an agent more powerful even than the genius of the lamp, that very night caused the alteration to be made, so that next morning the queen, looking out, saw the court divided according to her taste. Her majesty, it is said, was exceedingly gratified with this proof of his gallantry; but passed what was considered rather a sore joke upon Sir Thomas, saying, "That a house was much easier divided than united." Lady Graham and Sir Thomas, it seems, were at issue on the point of domestic supremacy; and Elizabeth, who hated all married women, was supposed to allude to this matrimonial schism. In going towards Uxbridge, which is twelve or fifteen miles from this city, on the

road to Oxford, there is a fine old place called Harefield, where once resided the famous Countess of Derby, the friend and admirer of that illustrious republican poet, John Milton. It was here that Milton's Arcades were represented, and in this neighbourhood the poet resided some years with his father. It was for the son of this lady he wrote the richest, the most poetical of all human productions, the Masque of Comus. Nobility becomes really illustrious when connected by friendship and benefits with the immortality of genius. Milton was an inflexible Republican in his political principles, and sided with the Parliament in its attempts to resist the tyrannical encroachments of Charles the First. In this situation he had an opportunity of saving the life of Sir William Davenant, who was taken up on a charge of being an emissary of Charles the second, then in exile. On the restoration Milton was excepted from the general amnesty, but was finally pardoned, as it is said, by the intercession of Sir William Davenant, who thus repaid his former good offices. His politics prevented his being a fashionable poet. His "Paradise Lost" was sold to the bookseller for one-tenth of the sum since paid for a dainty song of Tom Moore, set to music ; and the bad taste or servility of the critics suffered it to be forgotten, till Addison at length did ample justice to its beauties. Milton is rather in the back-ground at present, being quite eclipsed by the superior merits of Mr. Croly the laureat, Lord Byron, and the "Great Unknown." The Quarterly Review will certainly, ere long, convict him either of a want of genius, or a lack of religion, if it be only on account of his having been a Republican. I dined at Uxbridge ; and as no experienced English traveller ever omits making honourable or dishonourable mention of the inns, I must inform you,

for your particular satisfaction, that those of *Uxbridge*, although specially noted by Camden, are none of the best. The landlord of the *Crown*, however, treated me with considerable courtesy, seeing I did not come in a post-chaise; and as courtesy is much rarer here than good eating, I was satisfied. Fine words, although they butter no parsnips, make the parsnips palatable without butter.

Pursuing my route towards Oxford, I again got upon classic ground, about *Stoke Pogeis*, in the neighbourhood of which the poet Gray resided with his mother. He was a frequent visitor to the noble family there, and wrote his "Long Story" at the request of the ladies. To me it appears the very worst thing he ever did write; a very dull and doggerel ditty, with only one line in it worth preserving. Gray was ashamed of it, and tried to destroy all the copies, but the industry of editors, and the cupidity of booksellers, unhappily preserved it for posterity to wonder at. The Muses used to keep a little court at different times hereabouts. Milton lived not far off at Horton; Waller at Beaconsfield; and Pope occasionally in Windsor Forest. Edmund Burke also once occupied Waller's mansion at Beaconsfield; and if being under the dominion of imagination constitutes a poet, may certainly be classed with the trio. In the neighbourhood of Beaconsfield they show an old hollow tree, in which, it is affirmed, Waller wrote many of his poems. I do not believe much of the story; yet still it is pleasant to see old hollow trees derive an interest from these associations, that the residence of monarchs cannot confer upon the most splendid palaces. In deviating, just as the roads occasionally offered inducement, I had a view of a fine old palace, once the property of the Hampdens, a name so well known in our country for

inflexible patriotism, that it is often adopted with that of Russel and Sydney, by those who advocate the rights of the people. The family of Hampden was of great antiquity, of the genuine old Saxon blood, without any mixture of Norman. The gentry, who came over with William the Conqueror, were mere upstarts of the day before yesterday, compared with the Hampdens. But I was not thinking of their antiquity. As I contemplated the venerable pile, I was recalling to mind that noble Englishman, who was the first to put himself in the breach between an arbitrary king and an abused people ; of the man who dared to appeal to the laws of his country against the oppression of his sovereign to judges who betrayed their trust, and sacrificed their conscience at the shrine of a time-serving interest. Eight out of twelve decided against Hampden ; but though he lost his cause with the judges, he gained it with the people, and the decision became one of the principal grounds of the revolution that followed. Of such a man, it is of little moment who were his ancestors ; the blood that flowed in his veins was noble of itself, without tracing it to a noble ancestry.— But the name and the race are now no more, or, beyond doubt, we should see some of them at this moment foremost in the ranks, resisting the torrent of corruption, venality, and boundless extravagance in this government, and again appealing to the laws or the sword, in defence of the rights of Englishmen. The great John Hampden is acknowledged, even by Hume, the apologist of the Stuarts, to have been a man of the purest patriotism ; and such was the spotlessness of his character, that not one of the apologists of kingly pretension has ventured to impeach his motives or attack his memory. He was a near kinsman of Cromwell, and fell in action early in the com-

mencement of the war between the people and the king. His grandson became involved in the south sea scheme, and died by his own hands; he was succeeded by his brother, who dying without issue, the estates fell to a Trevor, who now bears the title of Viscount Hampden. To the disgrace of his country, I believe Hampden's life has never been written—at least, I have not been able to procure it at any of the booksellers! It is said he was one of those who took passage with Cromwell for New-England, and were stopped by an order of council. I cannot but regret that he did not reach our country, for perhaps he might have left there a posterity worthy the soil of freedom.—Hampden was always a friend to our New-England—may we never lose the recollection of his virtues or his friendship!

It is traditionary of the Hampdens, that they owned vast possessions in the time of Edward the Third, a considerable portion of which was forfeited by the heir of the family, (in consequence of some provocation not exactly known,) for giving the Black Prince a box on the ear. There is extant a couplet, which has reference to that circumstance.

“Tring, Wing, and Ivengo did go,
For striking the Black Prince a blow.”

You see, brother, the Hampdens were, from the first, gifted with the spirit of freemen. It is a pity the race is extinct; for never did England more require such men as Hampden and Sydney, to repel the encroachments of power, and check the insolence of authority. She has yet a Russel in the person of Lord John, one of the most respectable and patriotic noblemen in the kingdom.

Leaving this old nest of the eagles, I returned into the Oxford road, and pursued my way towards that famous city of the Muses, that is to say, the

Prize Muses; for the sacred nine of Oxford never sing now, except when tempted by a medal. Palaces and fine seats were sprinkled thickly by the road-side; but as they contained little else but collections of pictures to attract the stranger, I passed them by. Few things, in this world of trouble, are more intolerable than a visit to one of these *show-places*, where one is not only obliged to pay for opening every door, but, what is still worse, to listen to the eternal gabble of a cicerone by rote, who will by no means permit a man to consult his own taste in the selection of objects of admiration. The only way to silence one of those, is to give him a shilling when he expects half a guinea. He will never speak more, depend upon it.

The sunset, I remember, was exceedingly unpropitious to my entrance into Oxford, for it set in a profound English mist. I had been forewarned and forearmed of the beauties of the place, and that I should enter it by one of the finest and longest streets in the world. It certainly was long enough, for I thought never to have got to the end of it; but its beauties were too modest to meet the ardent gaze of a stranger, and retired quietly behind the fog. But the next morning made me glorious amends, for it was a wonder in England—a fine sunshiny morning—which is so uncommon here, that the people look for an earthquake, or a French invasion shortly afterwards. Whether it be the rarity of the occurrence, I can't say; but certainly a clear summer morning in this country seems to me even more beautiful than one of ours at home. The verdure looks gayer and richer than I ever saw it before, when the bright ray enlivens its dark green hues, and nature seems so rejoiced at the sight of her god, that she sheds showers of glad tears, that glitter like jewels upon the grass and flowers.

I was ready to be pleased with every thing ; and never, I believe, were the noble fanes of Oxford admired by a more enthusiastic votary. Learning was, for once in her life, lodged in palaces; some of which were so lofty and majestic, that I actually mistook them for poor-houses, which are beyond all comparison the most sumptuous edifices in this country. I cannot describe them, nor recollect half that I saw in this Gothic heaven. I had introductions to some of the jolly *fellows* ; but they were of very little use to me, owing to a most untoward matter, which I shall proceed to disclose, which disturbed the prize Muses, and occupied the exclusive attention of every member of the University, from the vice-chancellor in his white band, to the students in their black caps. To explain it properly, I must furnish you with a few preliminaries, concerning the peculiar constitution and privileges of the university, without which it would be difficult to comprehend the nature of the case.

The University of Oxford is governed by its own peculiar laws, which are administered, or ought to be, by a great officer, called the Chancellor ; but as almost every great office is executed here by a deputy or sub-deputy, the chancellor nominates to the university two persons, one to be chosen High Steward, the other Vice-chancellor. The high steward assists the proctors, if required, in the performance of their duties, and hears and decides all capital cases, arising within the jurisdiction of the University, when required by the chancellor. The vice-chancellor is, in almost every other respect, the deputy of the chancellor ; he receives the rents due the University, licenses, taverns, &c. and, to use the words of an old author, " He takes care that sermons, lectures, disputations, and other exercises, be performed ; that Heretics, Panders, Bawds, *Winchester geese*, &c. be expelled the Uni-

versity, and the converse of the students ; that the proctors and other officers do their duty ; that courts be duly called, and law-suits determined, without delay ; in a word, that whatever is for the honour or the profit of the University, or may conduce to the advantage of good literature, may be carefully obtained. The vice-chancellor, at his entrance into office, chooses two pro-vice-chancellors out of the heads of colleges, to one of whom he deposes his power during his absence. The high steward is chosen for life, but the vice-chancellor is nominated annually, and is always a person in holy orders, as well as the head of a college. Now for the affair which so effectually disturbed the repose, not to say the profound sleep, of this Temple of the Muses.

It seems a ferocious tailor, not having the fear of the vice-chancellor before his eyes, had brought a suit against a student of *Brazen-nose*, in the court of king's bench, when the statute prescribed that he should bring it before the vice-chancellor. The vice-chancellor, indignant at this contempt of his authority, hereupon summoned the tailor before him, and addressed him, as is affirmed, in something like the following, when he found that the souls of nine stout heroes were domiciled in the body of this ninth part of a man :

“Avaunt, and quit my sight !

Thy shears are edgeless; thou hast no thread and needle

In those paws, that thou dost stitch withal.

Approach thee like an Edinburgh Reviewer,

French Sans-Culotte, or damned democrat,

The Carbonari, half-starv'd radical,

Or Cato-street conspirator !

Nay, come like non-conformists in a row,

And swear that church and tithes shall be no more ;

Moot points of logic with a cambric needle ;

Or, cross-legged, like a rascal papist sit,

With thimble on thy pate instead of helmet,

And dare me to the shopboard with thy shears,

But never dare me to the king's bench court—

iSkip, stitch-louse, skip, I say !”

"Ay, ay," cried this unparalleled tailor; "ay, ay, Mr. Vice, you may talk Latin as much as you please; but, in plain English, I must have my money, and, what's more, I will. I have had enough of dunning; and as for bringing a suit in your courts here, I recovered one not long ago, and was almost ruined by it." The vice-chancellor, it is affirmed, did not swear; but it was the general opinion he would have done it, had he not been a clergyman.

The recreant tailor brought the curse of Ernulphus upon him; he was cursed in all the moods and tenses; in Latin and English; and would have been cursed in Greek and Hebrew, had any of the present professors been sufficiently versed in those tongues. He was formally excommunicated; his shop windows hermetically sealed, and himself prohibited from labouring in his vocation for the fiery students of Brazen-nose; his business was doomed to destruction here, and his soul hereafter. Still the thrice, and nine times valiant tailor, refused to take a single back-stitch or herring-bone, either to the right or to the left; he continued to demur to the jurisdiction of the vice-chancellor, and to stand by the King's Bench, which, next to the shopboard, he looked upon to be the purest seat of justice in the kingdom. "I defy the d—l and all his imps!" said the Tailor, snapping his fingers; which saying was held to be a reflection upon the vice-chancellor and the scholars.

In this state the matter remained all the time I staid at Oxford, which was nearly a week. The Tailor was the greatest man of the age; another Caliph Omar, enemy to learning and orthodoxy. His name was in every body's mouth, and the Muses, all nine of them, sung in praise of this ninth part of a man. The Senior Wrangler was deputed to argue with him, but the Tailor got him betwixt

the sharp shears of his logic, and almost cut him in two. A *Terræ Filius* was next sent; but, though his speech was bitterly satirical, the tailor remained as immovable as the sun himself. At prayers, and lectures, the students could think of nothing but the tailor; the jolly fellows could not sleep quietly upon the "Pennyless Bench" over their ale, for thinking of the tailor; the seamstresses, who are very pretty at Oxford, marked nothing on their linen, but Tailor; the little boys, at catechism, answered nothing but "the Tailor" to all questions; and several children, born about this time, cried for their nurses' thimbles before they were a day old. Never, in fact, since the days of the furious contests between the students of the "north and south," recorded by Anthony Wood, was the seat of the prize Muses in such a consternation. I left the place before the matter was settled, with a determination that if the Tailor were ever restored to the use of his weapons, and I ever had an opportunity, he should make me a full suit of the cloth called Thunder and Lightning, which cannot but equal armour of proof, considering his indomitable and valorous propensities.

Notwithstanding, however, the confusion which I have described, I gained sufficient opportunity to put my nose into some of the old rusty remains of antiquity, which abound in this place. Among these the Bodleian Library, the Ashmolean Museum, and the Arundel and Pomfret Marbles, are particularly curious and interesting. In the libraries are many notices of the early events which occurred in different ages, which throw vast light upon the state of manners, and mark the gradual changes produced by time and circumstances. As such, they are highly worthy of notice, and if I had possessed sufficient time or patience, I would

have made copious extracts from them. As it was, I could only copy a few of such as I considered might contribute to the future instruction or amusement of my friends. I will select some of these, pretty much as they occur in my memorandum-book. They are principally taken from Anthony Wood, whose work is a sort of store-house of Oxford antiquities. The nature of his book may be gathered from Wood's complaint of one John Shirley, *Terræ Filius* of Trinity College, in 1673, who said, "That the society of Merton would not let me live in the college, for fear I should pluck it down to search after antiquities; that I was so great a lover of antiquities, that I loved to live in an old cockle-loft, rather than in a spacious chamber; that I was *vir caducus*; that I intended to put into my book pictures of mother Louse and mother George, two old wives; that I would not let it be printed, because I would not have it new and common." This is the character of Anthony's book, given by a wag, with some little exaggeration, of course.

The state of learning at Oxford, in the thirteenth century, may be gathered from the following: "In the year 1284, John Peckham, Archbishop of Canterbury, came to Oxford, to visit Osney Abbey; which being finished, he called together the masters of the University, who appearing before him, he made a grave speech; then told them of divers erroneous opinions, which they, not becoming their wisdom, did entertain; and that neither by reason, nor upon any scholastical ground, but for the cause of commotion, did *impudently* affirm and defend, against the instructions and lessons of the ancient philosophers, and other wise men." Among their grammatical errors, it seems they held "*Ego currit*," and "*Ego legit*," to be good Latin.

As late as the beginning of the sixteenth century, the study of Greek was entirely unknown at Oxford; and, with the exception of Thomas Linacre, and one or two others, who were trying to introduce it into the University, the members treated the study of Greek with contempt. King James the First, with his Queen, in 1605, visited Oxford, and was entertained there with speeches, sermons, comedies, mysteries, and tragedies, for some days. Several regulations were made for their reception, among which the most remarkable are the following :

“ The University College, All Soules, and Magdalen College, do sett up verses at his Majesty's departure, upon such places where they may be seen as he passeth by.”

“ Doctor Parry to preach a Latin sermon three-quarters of an hour long.” It is stated afterwards, that His Majesty “ yawned mightily,” on this occasion; indeed, he seems to have been “ mightily” tired of the whole visit, if we may credit the chronicler, who gives the following account of his behaviour at a comedy :

“ The Comedy” quoth he, “ began at between nine and ten, and ended at one; the name of it was *Alba*, whereof I never knew the reason; it was a pastoral, much like one I had seen in King's College, Cambridge.” “ There were many rustical songes and dances, which made it very tedious, insomuch that if the chancellors of both universities had not entreated his Majesty earnestly, he would have been gone before half the comedy had been ended.”

Neither did His Majesty, it seems, relish their tragedy better than their comedy. The same writer, who, you may depend upon it, was a *Cantab*, proceeds to record—“ The next morning and afternoon we passed in hearing sermons and

disputations. The same day after supper, about 9 of the clock, they began to act the tragedy of *Ajax Flagellifer*, wherein the stage varied three times; they had all goodly antique apparel, but for all that, it was not acted so well by many degrees, as I have seen it in Cambridge. The King was very weary before he came thither, and much more wearied by it, and spoke many words of dislike."

A comedy called *Vertumnus* was next day represented, and though allowed by our *Cantab* to be much better performed than the others, "yet the King was so overwearied, that after a while he distasted it and fell asleep; when he awakened, he would have him gone, saying, I marvel what they think me to be, with such other like speeches, shewing his dislike thereof; yet did he tarry till they had ended it, which was after one o'clock." The only thing that pleased his majesty, was a "discreet and learned speech by Dr. Warner, dissuading men from tobacco, by good reasons and apt similes, backed by twenty syllogisms, which so delighted the great opponent of tobacco, that he said to the nobles about him, "God keep this fellow in a right course, he would prove a dangerous heretic; he is the best disputer I ever heard."

The poverty of the students at Oxford, in the middle of the sixteenth century, was such, that many of them were obliged to get a license from the chancellor to beg, and it appears that it was at that time common for them to go "a-begging with bags and wallets, and sing *Salve Regina* at rich men's dores." "The students were about this time (1559) so poor and beggarly, that many of them were forced to obtain license under the commissary's hand to require alms of well-disposed people; and indeed the want of exhibitions and

charity of religious people, was so much, that their usual saying now was,

"Sunt mule mure, nostraque fama fames."

The following clerical anecdotes may amuse you, at the same time that they illustrate the style of preaching, as well as the charity of the priests of those times :

"Richard Tavener, Esq. did several times preach at Oxford, and when he was high sheriff of the county, came into St. Mary's Church, out of pure charity, with a gold chain about his neck, and a sword, it is said, by his side." One of his sermons began as follows :

"Arriving at the mount of St. Mary's in the strong stage (the stone pulpit) where I now stand, I have brought you some fyne bisketts baked in the oven of charitye, carefully conserved for the chickens of the church, the sparrows of the spirit, and the sweet swallows of salvation." Mr. Sheriff Tavener must have been another Friar Gerund.

Two itinerant priests coming, says Anthony Wood, towards night, to a cell of Benedictines near Oxford, where, on a supposition of their being Mimes or Minstrels, they gained admittance. But the cellarer, sacristan, and others of the brethren, hoping to have been entertained by their buffoonery, and finding them to be nothing more than two poor priests, who had nothing but spiritual consolation to offer in return for their hospitality, disappointed of their mirth, they beat them soundly, and turned them out of the monastery.

The same author gives a character of Sir Walter Raleigh, who was of Oriel College, which I copied, for two reasons. Raleigh ought ever to be remembered and honoured in our country, as one

of the first who employed his influence and his fortune in laying the foundation of our western empire. His example, his persuasions, and his wealth, gave the first impulse to the tide of emigration in the southern portion of the United States ; and it is to him the succeeding generations should look up as their founder. For this reason, every particular of him is interesting to my mind ; and I should have copied the extract, even if it had not exhibited the original of a passage in Johnson's *Life of Goldsmith*, which has often been admired and quoted. "His eminent worth," says Wood, speaking of Raleigh, "both in domestic polity, foreign expeditions and discoveries, arts and literature, both practive and contemplative, was such, that they seemed at once to conquer both example and imitation. *Those that knew him well, esteemed him to be a person born to that only which he went about, so dexterous was he in all or most of his undertakings, in court, in camp, by sea, by land, with sword, with pen.*"

There is something I think singularly and oddly affecting in the following notices of the early Protestant martyrs, which I got out of Strype's *Memorials*, an old book in the Bodleian—

"I cannot here omit," he says, "old Father Latimer's habit at his appearing before the commissioners, which was also his habit while he remained prisoner at Oxford. He held his hat in his hand ; he had a kerchief on his head, and upon it a nightcap or two, and a great cap such as townsmen used, with two broad flaps to button under his chin : an old thread-bare freez gown of Bristow, girded to his body with a penny lether girdle, at which hanged by a long string of leather his Testament and his spectacles without case, hanging about his neck upon his breast." What would our modern English bishops, with their

twenty, thirty, ay, fifty thousands a year, say to this costume of one of the noblest of their tribe? I mean those consistent ones, who, it has been aptly said,—

“All over luxury, they at vice declaim,
Chide at ill lives, and at good livings aim;
On down they sleep, on downy carpets tread,
Their ancestors, th’ Apostles, wanted bread!
At home they lie, with pride, spleen, plenty stor’d,
And hire some poor dull rogue to serve the Lord.”

“In October,” continues Strype, “Ridley and Latimer were brought forth to their burning; and passing by Cranmer’s prison, Ridley looked up to have seen him, and to have taken his last farewell. But he was not then at the window, being engaged in a dispute with a Spanish friar. But he looked after them, and devoutly falling on his knees, prayed to God, to strengthen their faith and patience in that their last, but painful passage.”

I will conclude this letter with some curious particulars relating to the first introduction of newspapers into England, which took place little more than two hundred years ago. It is curious to trace the rise and progress of this species of periodicals, and to observe from what small beginnings they have increased to such a degree of consequence, as to have become one of the most powerful instruments in governing the minds of the people, and checking the excesses of their rulers. They undoubtedly originated in the growing importance of the people, and the consequent necessity of influencing their opinions, and they may justly be styled the peculiar guardians of their rights. Newspapers, together with the other branches of periodical literature, are now, in truth, in a great measure superseding the elaborate and ponderous

tomes of those profound philosophers and statesmen, whose works were only useful to the governors, not to the governed. And thus, while the progress and diffusion of free principles operate to a more general distribution of property, they, at the same time, produce a similar equality in the possession of intellectual acquirements. By means of periodical and diurnal literature, a portion of that knowledge, which was for ages locked up in libraries inaccessible to common people, and contained in books which they had as little leisure as opportunity to read, is now placed perpetually within reach, and in a form suitable to their leisure and capacity. I imagine the general diffusion of literature is, however, as little favourable to the production of prodigies in learning, as the general diffusion of free principles proves to the monopoly of wealth or power.

I am indebted to honest Anthony Wood for the succeeding list, and the particulars collected with so much industry. The first paper mentioned by him, is "*Mercurius Rusticus*, or the COUNTRY'S Complaint." It first appeared, he says, the 22d of August, 1642, in a single quarto sheet, and extended to only nineteen or twenty numbers. I believe Wood is mistaken here with regard to this being the first. Cleaveland, in giving an account of the London periodicals and diurnals, states, that "the original desiner of this kind was Dutch *Gallo-Belgicus* the *Protoplast*, and the modern *Mercuries* but *Hans en Kelders*." I have somewhere read that the *Mercurius Gallo-Belgicus* is mentioned in Carew's Survey of Cornwall, first published in 1602, and by Donne in some verses of the date of 1611. If the *Mercurius Rusticus* was the first of these diurnals, there is probably some error in the date as set down by Wood.

There was a second part of *Mercurius Rusticus*,

giving an account of some outrages committed on the cathedrals in various parts of England. These were all collected in a volume, four or five years after their first publication; but I believe no copy is extant at this time. It would be an invaluable accession to the treasures of His Grace of *****, or my Lord *****. These papers were written by one Bruno Ryves, a Dorsetshire man, first one of the clerks in New College, then chaplain to Magdalen, and then "a most noted and florid preacher" at Stanwell in the county of Middlesex. He afterwards became rector of St. Martin's, London, and chaplain to Charles the First. When the Presbyterians got the upper hand, they turned him out of his rectory, and he fared ill enough, until the Restoration, when he enjoyed several rich benefices, was "sworn scribe" to the order of the garter, and died in 1677.

Mercurius Aulicus, the next paper of this kind, was begun at Oxford, where the court then was, in 1642, and continued to be published once a week, till the latter part of 1645, when it ceased to appear with any degree of regularity. Wood says, it had a great deal of wit and buffoonery; and that Nedham, the writer of *Mercurius Britannicus*, was no more to be compared with *Aulicus*, than a dwarf to a giant. *Mercurius Aulicus*, according to Nedham, was the work of several hands, such as George Digby, Secretary Nicholas, and Birkenhead the scribe. He also says, that each college was assessed both for a weekly contribution of money and wit. But Wood says, that notwithstanding what this liar affirms, all Oxford knew, that John Birkenhead began, and continued them, only that in his absence his place was supplied by Peter Heylin.

Birkenhead was the son of a saddler in Cheshire, and became amanuensis to Archbishop

Laud, who got him elected a fellow of All Souls. When the king retired to Oxford, on account of the troubles, Birkenhead began the *Mercurius Aulicus*, which so pleased the king that he got him appointed Reader or Professor of Moral Philosophy. Being turned out by the parliamentary ascendancy, he went to London, where he was several times imprisoned, and lived by his wits, in helping young gentlemen out at dead lifts, in making poems, songs, and amorous epistles to their respective mistresses, &c. On the Restoration, times mended with him. He became successively Doctor of Civil Law, member of parliament, knight, a Master of Requests and of the Faculties, and member of the Royal Society. He died in 1679.

Mercurius Britannicus, *Mercurius Pragmaticus*, and *Mercurius Politicus*, were all written by Marchmont Nedham, a native of Oxfordshire, who was educated at All Souls college, and afterwards went to London, where he officiated as a schoolmaster or usher at Merchant Tailors. He belonged subsequently to Gray's Inn, where he obtained a comfortable subsistence, until the commencement of the parliamentary war, when, soon siding, says the author, with the rout and scum of the people, he made them weekly sport by railing at all that was noble and intelligent, in his paper called *Mercurius Britannicus*; wherein his aim was to sacrifice some noble lord, or even the king himself, to the beast with many heads. This prodigy of editorial consistency, however, was either bribed or persecuted into loyalty, since he afterwards was introduced to king Charles, kneeled down, and begged his forgiveness, and had the honour to kiss his majesty's hand. He then attacked his old friends, the Presbyterians, in *Mercurius Pragmaticus*, for which he was caught, im-

prisoned in Newgate, and escaped with his ears, through the interposition of Lenthall, the Speaker, and Bradshaw, President of the High Court, which brought Charles to the block. These obtained his pardon, I suppose, on condition of his once more changing sides. Accordingly, he commenced a new journal, under the title of *Mercurius Politicus*, in which he treated the cavaliers with as much severity as he had formerly done the Presbyterians. His writings had great influence on the popular feelings; for he was a good scholar, a poet, and a great wag, witty, humorous, and conceited. The royal party pitied him while he continued on their side, but afterwards, he was so much hated by them, that, according to our author, there were many, even in his time, who could not endure to hear Nedham's name mentioned. He died in 1678.

The *Mercurius Britannicus* was published once a week, on Monday, from 1643 to 1647, when the *Mercurius Pragmaticus*, for king Charles, was commenced and ended shortly afterwards, by Nedham again changing sides, and joining his old friends, the Presbyterians, or people. The next series, the *Mercurius Politicus*, it is said, contained many essays against monarchy, and in support of a free state; so much so, that the author was more than once stopped by the interference of the council of state. Their last order suppressed the paper for the future, in consequence of which, *Muddiman* and *Dury* began the publication of a semi-weekly paper, called the Parliamentary Intelligencer. To this succeeded the *Mercurius Publicus*, which was continued by Dury till 1663, when Roger L'Estrange took charge of it, and changed the title successively to the *Public Intelligencer* and *The News*. These continued till 1665, when L'Estrange gave them up, in consequence

of the publication of other and cheaper semi-weekly papers. These were the *Oxford Gazette*, by Henry Muddiman, afterwards called the *London Gazette*, when the court removed to London, and placed under the superintendence of Williamson, under-secretary of state, who employed Charles Perrot, A. M. to do the business under him, till the year 1671. From that time to the period of Wood's writing, they were, he says, constantly written by the under secretaries of state, and so continued.

As the progress of intelligence, and the reception of more free principles prepared the minds of the people to become interested in the affairs of government, newspapers and periodical journals continued to multiply, until it became impossible to keep an account of their successive appearance. Magazines, reviews, and political, and scientific, and literary, and philosophical journals multiplied apace, until the present time, when our daily opinions can scarcely be said to depend upon any other basis, than the varying interests and temporary supremacy of some one or other of these periodical or diurnal oracles. It is well for us, indeed, that those fundamental rules, those moral axioms, on which the relative duties of man to man, and man to society rest, are beyond the reach of the caprices of fashion, or the schemes of politicians; else we should be in danger of having no stationary land-marks, no God Terminus in morals, to designate either our rights or our duties.

I must not forget to tell you, there is no place in all Christendom, where they say their prayers so fast as at Oxford.

LETTER V.

London.

DEAR BROTHER,

IN my last I believe I forgot to inform you of a curious fact recorded concerning Oxford, in the very tedious, particular, and prosing accounts of those various "Progresses" made by Queen Elizabeth, at various times, through different parts of England, by which she reaped such harvests of popularity, and, what pleased her quite as well, lived at free quarters. There is certainly something servile in the nature of civilized man. An Indian will turn his back on any thing which might be supposed to challenge his admiration among civilized people, because he considers it a sort of acknowledgment of his inferiority, to wonder. Only, however, let a great personage come among a refined people, and they will follow, and shout at his heels, and wonder, and be delighted beyond measure, whenever he smiles, bows, or exhibits any of those ordinary condescensions which gentleman usually pay to their inferiors. The good folks will pardon a hundred acts of oppression in consideration of a bow and a smile.

But to my story. It is recorded that Queen Elizabeth, sometime in 1556, visited Oxford, where she was royally feasted for a whole week. "The day after," says the writer of the Progress, "she took her leave, and was conducted by the heads

as far as Shotover Hill, when the Earl of Liecester gave her notice, that they had accompanied her to the limits of their jurisdiction. From hence, casting her eyes back upon Oxford with all possible marks of tenderness and affection, she bade them farewell. The *Queen's countenance* had such an effect upon the diligence of this learned body, that within a few years after, it produced more shining instances of real worth, than had ever been sent abroad, at the same time in any age whatsoever." This is one of the most marvellous effects of the Queen's countenance I remember; it shows how complaisant even genius and learning are, in countries where the people are brought up with a proper notion of the "divine right of kings." A mere visit to Oxford awakened all the Muses, and inspired not only learning, but "worth," in this ancient seminary of loyalty. Oxford, with all its beauties, is one of the dullest places I ever visited; and had not the Tailor given it some additional interest, I should have been heartily tired with the sameness of every thing I saw. In leaving it, I had a view of the village of Cumnor, which has lately become noted as the scene of part of the romance of Kenilworth. I did not visit it; the scenes described by the "Great Unknown" are not yet classical, and I do not think they ever will be.

From hence to Worcester, nothing particular occurred, and I shall reserve, till a future opportunity, my observations on what I saw, at the different places where I stopped occasionally, and spent from one to three days, in making inquiries on particular subjects. There were as usual several fine seats, and one in particular at Dickey, where I was told were some valuable pictures; but knowing the price one must pay in money and patience for these treats, I avoided all

such places. In general I may observe, that the country was not so pretty as in some other parts I have seen, and that occasionally it presented scenes of barrenness. Two spots, however, seem worthy of some little commemoration. One is the ancient town of Evesham; the other, the famous Malvern Hill, where every picturesque tourist makes a point of being enraptured. I'll not be out of fashion.

Evesham is derived, by the monkish antiquaries, from one Eaves, swineherd to the Bishop of Worcester. As bishops in those days were nearly all of them saints, which I am sorry to say is not the case at present, I presume their swineherds were men of some consequence, by their giving names to towns. This part of England, between Oxford and Worcester, seems to have been the paradise of monks. At Abingdon they had a rich and stately monastery, whose revenue, in an age when money was probably twenty times more valuable than at present, amounted to about two thousand sterling a year. At Evesham they were lords of twenty-two towns and manors. No wonder such a church abounded in saints! The principal reason for detaining you a little at Evesham is connected, however, with a different matter. It was here, that the famous Simon Mountford, Earl of Liecester, the champion of the English Barons, and the great asserter of Magna Charta, after having been virtually lord of England and its paltry king, fought his last fight, was defeated and slain. Like many other asserters of popular and aristocratic rights, in monarchies, his character has come down to us covered with imputations of ingratitude, perfidy, and ambition. But we should be cautious how we receive the relations of characters and events from the pens of historians, who wrote while the descendants of the king, whom Mountford oppos-

ed, occupied the throne of England. If historians can ever be said to be impartial, it is only when the events they record, and the characters they discuss, are so distant or obscure, that they are just as likely to err through ignorance, as their predecessors were through prejudice. There is something, at all events, about the renown of this Simon Mountford, which made an impression on me early in life; and as he took the popular side, at least the only popular side there was at that time, I do not, for my part, exactly see, why he is not as good a martyr as Charles the First. This Evesham is, at present, a decayed borough, which sends members to Parliament, and assists in the composition of that mighty mass of corruption.

Not far from hence, I passed the site of another fat rookery of monks, who in ancient times revelled in the spoils of a score of manors and towns. The name of this place is *Pershore*, and from hence to Worcester is one of the pleasantest rides in the whole country. This last is one of the most lively, agreeable, not to say beautiful, cities I have ever seen out of our own country. Though one of the most ancient in England, it displays nothing, or almost nothing, of that gloomy aspect of decay, which may be observed in every other old city I have visited; where the houses look old, the people look old, and the very air we breathe seems to come out of old cellars and mildewed cloisters. I never get among these reliques of past changes, without my imagination soon becoming tinged with gloom and superstition; there is certainly something in the very style of a Gothic building that is calculated to nourish such impressions, and a ghost, a miracle, or a murder, is like a fish out of water, unless connected with this species of architecture; it was the cause, as well as the effect, of the superstitious character of those times in which it flourished.

But there is little of this about this charming city, where the girls trip along as if they were going a maying, and the men actually look as if they had something to do; it lies close by the side of the Severn, which being the largest river in England, is of course entitled to be described in the superlative. Accordingly the poets call it the "majestic," "the magnificent," "the Father of Rivers," &c. while tourists never mention it without some epithet indicative of prodigious magnitude. This prodigious river is crossed here by a bridge of five arches; it rises in Plinlimmon, in Montgomeryshire, and falls into the Bristol Channel, after an "*endless course of one hundred and thirty miles!*"

As I shall have occasion, in the course of my tours, to remark the frequent recurrence of this species of the bathos, in describing scenes of nature, permit me to make a few observations once for all. Every man, in speaking of whatever is great in his estimation, refers to some standard of comparison, formed from the result of his own individual experience. The greatest he has seen, is, to his imagination, the greatest in the world. Hence the English tourist calls his rivers, his mountains, and his lakes the greatest, the highest, and the most beautiful, because he knows of no other. When one of the picturesque tourists comes to the mighty Severn, he is in raptures; when he beholds the lake of *Bala*, the largest in Wales, he calls it "this immense body of water," although, as I am an authentic traveller, it is but four miles long and one broad! But, "body o'me," when he mounts to the summit of *Snowdon*, which is of the "prodigious height" of three thousand six hundred feet, he is unalterably convinced that he can overlook the tops of the *Andes*, and that the whole world lies directly under his nose. The

painters of the picturesque also practise this species of imposition upon foreigners, especially us Americans, by heightening, as it is called, the effect of their pieces; that is to say, by making the water-falls higher, the rocks more rugged, and the hills more perpendicular. When I came to view the originals of those coloured landscapes, which abound to such a degree in our parlours and print-shops at home, I did not know them. It is inconceivable, brother, how they are exaggerated in every feature of beauty and sublimity.

Far be it from me to flout these people for not having larger rivers, higher mountains, finer waterfalls, and broader lakes. They cannot help it. All I wish is to put you on your guard against the superlative style in which they speak of things, to which, in our country, we should apply some diminutive epithet. Our standard of greatness is different from theirs. Our Mississippi and Missouri are alone called "mighty streams," because they course their thousands of miles, and roll a tribute to the sea greater than that of all the rivers of Britain combined. Our Lake Superior, with its hundred rivers, is alone named in the language of the superlative degree, because you could empty all the lakes of Britain into its bosom, as a drop in the bucket, without raising its surface the breadth of a hair. Some of our *hills* too, as the *white hills* of New-Hampshire, are twice as high as the "mighty Snowdon," yet they are only called hills. This habit of speaking in the superlative has also crept into their modes of estimating their exploits, the beauties of their landscapes, the excellence of their literature, and, above all, the talents of their great men. In just the same degree that they exaggerate the dimensions of natural objects to the imagination, by their inflated epithets, do they exaggerate the talents and qua-

fications of their great men. But I shall reserve this part of the subject for a future occasion, when I contemplate instituting some little comparison between our great living characters, and those now at the top of the "mighty Snowdonian summit" of glory here. At present, I must not forget this "boundless" city of Worcester, and its "magnificent" river.

It is spread, as I before stated, along the Severn, which is really a pretty little river, or rather, as we should call it at home, a creek. They go so far as to say, that Worcester owes its foundation to *Constantine Chlorus*. It was burnt by Hardicanute the Dane; set fire to by Roger de Montgomery; afterwards burnt by accident; again burnt in the wars of king Stephen and Maud; in the time of Henry the Second it again underwent the same fate. From out of all these burnings Worcester rose a gay, a beautiful city; the seat of the graces in this part of England, and the town-residence, in winter, of many of the country gentry of these parts, who prefer it to the noise, smoke, and corruption of London. It is just large enough for all the real purposes of social enjoyment, containing, I should imagine, between fifteen and eighteen thousand persons. From these is formed one of the most agreeable, polite, and intelligent circles to be found any where; equal in polish, and superior in real politeness to the London *Beau Monde*, which is, in fact, a fantastic assemblage of coxcombs and coquettes, with now and then a fashionable poet or chymist to give it a literary or scientific air.

After all, however, as to mere outward neatness and beauty, as to that air of competency and plenty, which communicates such a charm to every thing around, I have, in no part of the world, seen any thing to compare with the aspect of our ci-

ties. Those possess all the freshness of youth ; there is nothing old, wrinkled, or mouldy in their physiognomy, and, take them for all and all, there is nothing in the old world to compare with them. Here, I mean in the old world, you will see the two extremes, not only of riches and poverty, splendour and decay, but of every thing else, treading on each other's heels, or elbowing one another side by side. The palace and the hovel—the new temple and the mouldering ruin—the saint and the sinner in the same cart—the king, the beggar, and the pickpocket, in the same procession. Worcester is famous for its manufactory of porcelain, which I visited, but feel incompetent to describe, so as to enable you to comprehend the process ; so I refer you to other authorities, if you wish for the particulars. It is one of the most ancient episcopal jurisdictions in England, and numbers a succession of between fourscore and a hundred bishops, among whom are one pope and four saints ; all of which lived previously to the reformation. To the utter disgrace of the protestant church, it has not produced a single saint, since that time, among all its bishops. The church of St. Helens is a most venerable old structure, which will be somewhat disfigured by a new tower they have nearly finished, for the purpose of reinstating a ring of bells. I left this place with regret, which is actually more than I can say of any other I have yet been in here, owing to the disgusting coldness of English cities. From Worcester I proceeded towards Hereford, it being my intention to visit some of the picturesque scenery of the Wye, and thence take the mighty Snowdon by the hair of his head. The road was one of the roughest I had yet travelled, but the country on either side abounded in fruit trees and flowers. The man who drove my vehicle assured me I might ga-

ther a rose, without being transported to Botany Bay, that paradise of English rogues. I ventured to pluck a beautiful one over the fence, and would you believe it, brother, was neither shot by a spring gun, caught in a man-trap, nor prosecuted afterwards for trespass! This I record as the first miracle which has happened to me in this country. I confess, however, a stout, square, roughfaced damsel did start out upon me, and bawl out something, which luckily I could not understand; for I do assure you, that notwithstanding the vulgar opinion on our side of the water, the English is not the national tongue of this country. In the various counties, particularly Somerset, Yorkshire, Cumberland, and elsewhere, I give you my honour, not one in a hundred can speak the English language. Were not my servant a sort of booby, who speaks all the languages of this island, except the English, I should be quite at a loss to understand or be understood. I am often reminded, by such little incidents as this of the rose, of the difference between this country and our liberal and plentiful land, in which a country gentleman or common farmer would be disgraced as a miser or a brute, who should refuse to a stranger or his neighbours his flowers or his fruit. Of the latter, indeed, no one scruples to pluck what he likes from the road-side without ever asking. Soon I came to the foot of Malvern hill, where I halted at a neat inn at its foot, with the determined purpose of going to the uttermost top, where, as I have read in all the picturesque tours, was to be seen one of the finest prospects in England. As I never am in a hurry to mount hills, I concluded to rest a while, and manage to get to the proper point a little before sunset. Accordingly, a couple of hours after dinner, I set forth, accompanied by a guide, one of those who do not speak English. I stipulated for

this ; for I abominate a fellow, who always points out the most striking beauties first, instead of letting our eyes guide us. Besides, I cannot bear to have my feelings on these occasions spoiled by a fellow crying out " charming," " beautiful !" and all that, just like a parrot, or a fashionable belle, who has no eye for any other beauties than her own.

In my opinion, brother, the very first excellence of this fine view is, that the ascent to it is not fatiguing. Fatigue destroys the very essence and being of delight. I have often, in my own country, climbed a rugged precipice to see a fine prospect, and when I got to the top, felt as if I could lie down and die, I was so tired. But the ascent of Malvern hill is all upon an easy slope, covered with velvet grass. Were it more laborious, however, it would pay well, for it is indeed a noble throne for the very king of the picturesque. The evening was a little hazy, and the atmosphere presented that soft sleepiness of hue, on which the soul, at least mine, reposes with such measureless luxury. The fields just beneath, were some of them in the sun, some in the shade, and their different tints were like the first and second of two well-tuned instruments, producing variety and harmony. Farther off, landscape faded by imperceptible gradations into less of the bright green, and more of the sky blue. The white houses were sprinkled among villages, and lawns, and woody groves, whose foliage was all in soft fleeces. Among these, through the vale of Evesham, I saw two little rivers, like white ribands, waving and meandering along ; and in the distance the Welsh mountains, whose outlines could hardly be distinguished from the blue sky. On inquiring the names of these streams, I made out to comprehend from my guide, that one of them, the smallest, was the Avon. The very name of this river conjured up visions and recol-

lections of Shakspeare, to whom it is for ever consecrated, and mingled what was alone wanting in my impressions, the charm of moral association, with all that is beautiful to the eye. Perhaps in all England there was not, at that moment, a heart more devoted to the memory of their favourite bard, than mine, a solitary, unknown, and unobserved native of a world, that probably Shakspeare never thought of, or his genius, which pervaded all space, would not have overlooked the new and beautiful allusions, with which it might have furnished him. In all the plays of Shakspeare, I believe there is nothing remotely alluding to America, although some of the dramatic writers, who were his cotemporaries, but who outlived him, make frequent mention of Virginia, and "the Virginian voyage."

Long after the sun went down, I lingered on the top of this beautiful hill, for the moon rose as the sun set, and what was before clothed in gold, appeared, if possible, more chaste and lovely, apparelled in silver. The next day I proceeded on towards Hereford, through an exuberant hop country, rich also in every other production of English husbandry, as well as in pastoral beauty and fine houses, to a tolerably miserable town, the name of which I think is Ledbury, for it is so equivocally written in my memorandum book, that I will not swear to it. The next day I arrived at a place noted in days of yore.

LETTER VI.

London.

DEAR BROTHER,

Hereford looks dull and is dull. There is no deception in the place; for in approaching, it presents a heavy, flat appearance, very different from Worcester. There is little to be gleaned here, except old tales about Griffin the Welshman, Algar the Englishman, Leofgar the Bishop, and William Fitz-Osborne, with remains of English and Roman antiquities; all which is to be found in every book of travels, and all which you are as well acquainted with as myself. The picturesque tourists come hither for the purpose of viewing the scenery and ancient remains of the river Wye, which abounds in some of the finest landscapes to be seen in this country, and they all make a point of repeating over the same things. Among the public buildings here, the Cathedral is the principal; and of all parts of a cathedral, the most interesting to me are the old tombs to be found in most of them. Here is to be seen a number of these, most of them erected in memory of bishops and ecclesiastics. Among them, however, is one representing a figure in close armour, with the hands raised in prayer, the usual fashion of the more ancient tombs. The figure had a wooden leg, whence I concluded he

was some great soldier, who had lost it in the wars ; but it turned out, that the leg of the figure, and not that of the living knight, had been accidentally broken off, and replaced by an artist of this place. Observing a garter, the badge of the order of knights of the garter, remaining upon the leg, the artist carved another on the wooden one, exactly like it, so that this is, beyond doubt, the best gartered knight in all England. Hereford, although its name is quite familiar to our American ears, is but an insignificant place, containing not more than seven thousand inhabitants. As an ancient frontier town between England and Wales, it has however derived historical consequence, from having been overrun, plundered, taken and retaken by Welsh and English marauding princes and border-barons. Its castle was once reputed of great strength, but there is scarcely a vestige of it remaining, although its adjacent walks, along the river, being kept in good order, form a most agreeable promenade. Hereford is one of the most orthodox places in England ; so much so, that when I was there, the Library Association in that town actually talked of making an *Auto de Fe* of Hume, Gibbon, and some other writers, who have marvellously disturbed the fat dignitaries of the church ! I am not jesting, upon my word, and from this and other indications, begin to have serious doubts, whether the nineteenth century will not turn out in the end almost as enlightened as the ninth.

Being now on the borders of the renowned land of picturesque, I left my vehicle, which, whether buggy, cart, or coach and six, posterity will never know from me. I equipped myself, and the professor of English tongues I spoke of in my last, with each a horse, that I might be the more free to indulge my whim or curiosity, by deviating into holes and cor-

ners. We set forth one fine morning, that is to say, English fine ; for though the old copper sun occasionally showed a face about the colour of one of our Indians, still, as it only misted a little, but did not rain, by the constitution of England it was entitled to the privileges of a fine day.

The first objects which, in going out of town, attracted my notice, were a dozen or two of beggars, who form a considerable feature of the picturesque in many of the English landscapes, I assure you. Having distanced these, I proceeded towards a noble old place, called *Holme Lacy*, belonging to the Duke of Norfolk, for the purpose of reconnoitring a scene, once a favourite resort of Pope. The situation is just fit for a poet ; quiet, soft, and secluded, in the midst of rural beauties. It was once the property of the ancient family of Scudamore, and the last viscount was an intimate friend of the poet, who wrote a great deal in these shades. By the aid of that key which unlocks the flinty hearts of every serving-man and serving-maid in the kingdom, I was permitted to enter the grounds and ramble about almost at pleasure. I always feel like a pilgrim visiting the shrine of a tutelary saint, in such scenes, hallowed by such associations—there is something so blameless, so pure, so spiritual in the fame of literary genius, more especially poetical inspiration. The harp of the true poet, when tuned to virtuous feeling, is like the harp of the angels, accompanied by the song of the cherubim and seraphim.

From hence, I pursued my devious course to Ross, and crossed a steep hill, where the bold scenery of this region began to make its appearance ; some distance beyond, I passed Harewood, an old seat. In the adjoining forest, is the scene of the bloody tragedy of *Elfrida*, which I refrain from harping upon, because we have been lately

so stultified with history, vamped up in romance and poetry, that no more is necessary at present. I think, however, it would be no bad subject for the "Great Unknown." Next came we to the ruins of an old castle, which I visited for no other reason, than because it was once the property of Arthur Grey, renowned for his Irish wars, but still more as the friend and benefactor of Spenser, who accompanied him to Ireland, as his secretary, and received from him a grant of three thousand acres of land there. Spenser has expressed his gratitude in a sonnet prefixed to the Fairy Queen. Very little of this castle now remains. It has passed from the Greys; but long after a stone or a vestige is to be seen, the spot will be remembered and known, as connected with the benefactor of this charming poet.

Leaving Wilton Castle on the right, I proceeded some distance, three or four miles perhaps, without being particularly struck with any features in the landscape. Some fishermen, catching trout in little wicker-basket boats, attracted my notice, however. When I came to Goodrich Castle, I was so struck with its venerable aspect, covered half over with green moss, that I determined once for all to invade this strong hold, and give you one single description, which is to satisfy you for the rest of your life. It is placed on a fine eminence, overlooking the river, and is surrounded by a deep trench, some fifty feet wide, as I should judge, cut out of the solid rock. The first apartment, inside the gate, is a small room to the left, with an ornamental window, and large stone chalice for holding the holy water. From hence it has been sagely concluded, that this was the chapel, of which I have not the least doubt. A mass of ruins directly opposite, with an octagon column rising out of them, indicates the ancient Baronial Hall, where they no doubt held mortal carousals in the time of

William Marshall, Gilbert Talbot, and Harry Grey, successively possessors of the castle. A large square tower remains, flaunting amidst its decay, in moss and clambering vines, that almost make it look gay. This is said to have been built by an Irish Macbeth, a prisoner, who worked out his freedom, and that of his son, by building this enormous keep. Inside of this are mildewed, damp, and dreary walls, festooned with cobwebs, in which I observed certain old spiders that came over with William the conqueror.

At the iron works, known by the name of Bishop's Wood, the scenery waxed more and more beautiful. At Bicknor I began to comprehend that there was some little reason for the raptures of picturesque tourists, when speaking of the river Wye. Rocks of the boldest magnitude, dressed out in verdure, at every little projection or crevice, and hanging over the water, give a character of grandeur to the scenery, while the narrowness of the stream itself contributes to the sublime, by giving a comparative altitude to the precipices. You tell me you lately sailed up the Hudson River in the state of New York, and observed, how the effect of one magnificent feature of sublimity is diminished by the grandeur and immensity of another. The Palisades, as they are called, are much higher, and in every way more noble than the cliffs of the Wye, but the wideness of the Hudson takes from them more than half their effect, while the narrow channel of the Wye adds to those I am speaking of in the same or a greater proportion. This remark may be extended to almost all our scenery; the very vastness of the constituents of our landscapes diminishes the effect, not only of the different parts, but of the whole combined. I was more particularly struck with the truth of this in viewing parts of Wales, where, owing to the proximity of objects,

the narrowness of glens, and the disposition of rocks, the highest effect of sublimity was produced by objects comparatively diminutive.

Among the wonders of this region, are Tintern Abbey, Chepstowe Castle, and Piercefield, the latter, one of the most famous *Show-Places* in England. The abbey, to my mind, is more remarkable for the exquisite beauty and finish of its remaining parts, than for its situation, which is low, and does not command a view of the river, except from above. It is also surrounded by cottages, inhabited by workmen belonging to neighbouring iron works, the din of whose hammers disturbs, of an evening, the repose of the scene. But the inside is indescribably fine, and cannot be done justice to by any other medium than that of actual inspection. All I shall say is, that as a mere ruin, it exceeds any thing I have seen since, or ever saw before. Its history is not particularly interesting. It was, according to the fashion of the age, endowed by various benefactions in the elder times, from pious, or profligate noblemen, who made their peace with heaven by enriching the church; and when the fashion changed, it was suppressed and deprived of its revenues, which were shared again among the nobility from whose munificence or fears they were first obtained. It is now, if I recollect right, the property of the Duke of Beaufort, who takes pains to prevent its further decay.

The scenery in the neighbourhood of Chepstowe Castle is equal to any on the Wye. A bridge, which, whether handsome or not, is always a good object in a landscape, crosses near it, below which, on the opposite side, is a range of cliffs rising directly out of the water, on whose sides the ivy and the moss luxuriate, and over whose top the verdure nods. But I must try and elevate myself to the proper degree of picturesque sublimity, and talk a

little like a traveller on this momentous occasion. Advancing then towards the battlements, (I beg pardon, massive battlements) and sky-aspiring turrets of this adamantine work of ages, I was struck dumb by the view of a grand entrance, personifying the repulsive gloom, feudal reserve, and frantic ferocity of the times, in which its everlasting walls, which are now almost decayed, were reared. The very knocker was warlike, being nothing more than a cannon ball suspended by a vast chain, with which I ordered my man to "knock me here at the gate." He did so, and the very walls, not only of the castle, but the river on which it stands, trembled at the sound. The warder of the castle did not make his appearance, nor did any whylome eftsoons peep over the wall, with his cross-bow levelled, and demand our business, but an exceedingly decrepid, wrinkled, and withal, ugly old woman did, after some unreasonable delay, open the gate for our admittance, upon receiving a piece of that, which melts stone-walls and stony hearts in this country. The professor of English tongues looked rather shy; for he came from a shire where the witches grew, and privately assured me that this old woman had all the marks about her. Having already described one castle, I hold myself exonerated from describing any more; for, after all, no words can give any idea except a false one, of visible objects for which our senses have acquired no standard. I will only mention, that here, in a large round tower of the ancient citadel, Henry Martin, one of king Charles' judges, was confined thirty years, and here he died. There is probably no set of men, whose memory has been treated with more injustice, or who suffered more unrelenting persecution, than these high-souled republicans. On the accession of Charles the Second, they were hunted through

England, Switzerland, and all parts of Europe—nay, in our new world, where three of them, Whalley, Dixwell, and Goffe, found a refuge, and remained secreted for half the life of man. There is perhaps no instance on record, of a secret intrusted to so many persons, so dangerous to keep, and for the disclosure of which there were so many temptations of danger and interest, being kept so long and with such inflexible faith. Yet not one betrayed them. They were in New-Haven, when the king's officers were searching every house, nay, they were in the very house they searched; yet such was the cool discretion and inflexible faith of the people, that they escaped discovery. They lived many years at Hadley, died there, and two of them were buried in the church-yard at New-Haven, without its being known to a single person who ever betrayed the secret, till it was no longer of consequence to the safety of any human being. The truth is, that the sentiment of the people of New-England sanctioned their condemnation of the king, and the hearts of the colonists were with those bold, inflexible patriots, who dared to punish a tyrant for making war against his people. I have often, when at Yale, seen the graves of Dixwell and Whalley, each designated by a stone, which, humble as it is, is calculated to retain their initials, and the time of their decease, for ages. It is a hard, red, primitive stone, very thick, and pointed at the top, in such a way as to form nearly the two sides of a triangle. They lie close together, at the west end of the old Presbyterian Church, where I hope they will remain for ever undisturbed. They were the judges of kings; and, although they escaped a violent death, their latter life was one long series of exile, danger, seclusion, and oblivion. Henry Martin was another of these, and was spared only for per-

petual imprisonment. Mr. Southey wrote some exceedingly blank verse on the occasion upon the walls of Chepstowe.

Piercefield owes its celebrated improvements to Valentine Morris, of St. Vincents, in the West Indies, who wrecked his fortune upon these rocks, and, as usual, was obliged to sell what had cost him a vast sum, the fruits of which he never enjoyed. A Mr. Smith purchased it, but got tired, as every man does, of such expensive playthings, and sold it to Colonel Wood, who, covered with the spoils of India, also placed vast sums out upon the rocks for other people to enjoy, which was very good of him. He got tired too, and sold it to a Mr. Wells, who I believe still holds out, but will not probably do so very long. There are, it seems, certain days in which only the *show-place* is opened, and the day I applied for admittance happened not to be one of these. Not being inclined to wait two days for the *show*, I turned away in considerable dudgeon, and took back all the admiration I had thrown away upon the place. If my conscience would permit me, I would deny all its beauties most resolutely. I forgot to tell you, that the master of the house was at home, which accounted for the failure of my old system of bribery and corruption.

My next excursion was to the city of Gloucester, situated on the "noble Severn," which, notwithstanding its dignity, is here only navigable for smaller vessels. It is one of the principal cities of this part of England. I found an air of business here, very different from Hereford, and in fact it is a place of considerable trade in pins, &c. by means of the river, which is divided into two channels here. But the great wonder of the place, and that which most attracted my attention, is the cathedral, which is one of the finest in this

country. Its lofty tower, and transparent pinnacles, ornamented with beautiful fret-work—the majestic roof, and Gothic ornaments of the choir, with the old Saxon pillars, and arches supporting the aisle—in short, the singular, yet not unharmonious combination of different ages of architecture, all contributed to engage my wonder. It was begun, as antiquaries have decided, about the latter end of the tenth century, and not completed, as it now stands, till more than four hundred years afterwards. It therefore exhibits a curious, as well as complete exemplification of the variations and progress of church-architecture in England. It would fill a book to describe all the various portions of this building, and even then, without drawings, the impression would be altogether indistinct. There are several very ancient tombs; among others, that of Edward the Second, which is very singular as well as striking. His effigies exhibit him with cropped hair and beard, whence we may conclude, this was the fashion of the time.

This, and many other vast edifices of a similar kind, form one among the many boasts of the people of this country. They certainly add both dignity and splendour to the cities where they are situated; and the stranger, while contemplating them with awe and admiration, is apt to forget what an expense of human labour was here applied to purposes of church vanity; what vast sums of money were taken from the poor people, to rear those ostentatious monuments of the power and pride of churchmen. They were built in ages when probably one-third of the wealth of the kingdom flowed into the treasury of the church; when kings trembled at the frown of a mitred minion of the pope; and the people were the beasts of burthen that laboured for them all. When we reflect

that the labours of millions, the wealth of kingdoms were thus invested in a dead capital, that yields nothing to the state; and how many hundred thousand people are, at this moment, suffering for the common necessities of life, it is difficult to resist the impression, that it would add to the happiness of mankind, if the incalculable sums lavished on these temples of human vanity, could be made to return to the children of those whose fathers paid the price. Nothing could be lost on the score of religion, since these immense structures are not, in the least, calculated for sermons, which cannot be heard through their interminable aisles.

It is difficult, my dear brother, not to say impossible, to attempt to counteract or restrain the excesses of any principle, without being considered its enemy. This is most especially the case with religion, which, as it is one of the most powerful motives of human action, is peculiarly liable to run into extremes. Having the sanction of divine authority for its truths, it is extremely apt to challenge it for its abuses. Hence, it will not brook restraint of any kind, and becomes a persecuting fiend, instead of a mild and forgiving angel, when its excesses are questioned or exposed. The purest motives of love to God and man are of no avail; the most blameless characters are assailed, and the mildest remonstrances stigmatized with the imputation of hostility to religion. Few, who have attempted the task of restraining the extravagant pretensions of churchmen, have escaped the imputation of enmity to religion; and among the most numerous classes of martyrs will be found those who have fallen sacrifices, not to the fire, but to the pens and tongues of persecution.

For this reason, no prudent man, who values his good name, will, especially at this time, venture to insinuate, that the doctrines of salvation need not such expensive temples to make them palatable; that simplicity, lowliness, and economy in the church, are virtues of primitive origin, and that the affections of man can ascend to his Maker, unaided by temples that impoverish a whole district to support. I can only judge by my own feelings; and I can aver with truth, that I have received more vivid impressions of religious awe, and love, and admiration, in the wild solitudes of nature, than in the most splendid temples, which convey ideas rather of the powers of man, than of his Maker. In the times, however, that most of these were erected, the ecclesiastics, not being permitted to marry, and having few or no ties of blood or kindred to restrain them, generally lavished their surplus revenues in embellishing their churches. Sometimes indeed they employed them in works of public utility, thus returning the wages of labour to the labourers and the public, in general benefits. This certainly was the best possible way of disposing of their wealth; and had the practice been more general, it would have been a sufficient argument in reply to all the objections ever urged against the celibacy of the clergy. At that time, much of the vast wealth of the church of England was either employed in public benefits, or public embellishments; now, it is employed to enrich private individuals, and descends to the posterity of the prelates, instead of being dedicated to piety, charity, and public works.

Adieu.

LETTER VII.

London.

DEAR BROTHER,

AT Gloucester I received some information which induced me to alter my original design of penetrating into Wales from that quarter, and determined me to proceed to Shrewsbury, thence into North Wales. I was told I might in this way have an opportunity of seeing one of the finest parts of the country. As it was of little consequence to me which way I entered into Wales, I accordingly proceeded towards Shrewsbury, by the vale of Evesham, and another beautiful vale extending to the foot of Coteswold Hills. Crossing another hill, which separates the two valleys, I had a noble prospect of the cities of Gloucester and Worcester, with almost countless villas and villages, in the midst of a rich assemblage of natural beauty. At the foot of this hill is the ancient Evesham, which lies on the river Avon, out of which I drank to the memory of Shakspeare. But what was rather extraordinary, I found very little inspiration therefrom.

Somewhere about two centuries ago, Coteswold Hill was famed for certain annual sports, called Dover's Olympics, of which Anthony Wood gives the following account :

"These games were begun and continued at a certain time in the year, for forty years, by one

Robert Dover, an attorney of Benton-on-the-Heath, in Warwickshire, son of John Dover of Norfolk; who being full of activity, and of a generous, free, and public spirit, did, with leave of James the First, select a place on Coteswold Hills, in Gloucestershire, whereon these games should be acted. Endimion Porter, Esq. a native of that county, and a servant of that King, a person also of a most generous spirit, did, to encourage Dover, give him some of the King's old clothes, with a hat, and feather, and ruff, purposely to grace him, and consequently the solemnity. Dover was constantly there in person, well mounted and accoutred, and was the chief director and manager of those games, frequented by the nobility and gentry, (some of whom came sixty miles to see them) *even till the rascally rebellion was begun by the Presbyterians; which gave a stop to their proceedings, and spoiled all that was generous or ingenious elsewhere.*" These games were celebrated in verses by Ben Jonson, Drayton, Randolph, Marmyon, Heywood, and many other wits of the day. Their poems, it is said, were collected and published, with a picture of Dover on horseback, superintending the games: the book, I believe, is not extant.

We now advanced into Warwickshire, famous for its valiant champion, Guy, and a thousand times more famous for its Shakspeare, to whom the world is indebted for more pleasant hours than all the bloody triumphs of a thousand heroes have ever bestowed upon mankind. What a charming reflection it is, to think that genius has the power of giving delight, when the organization of mind and matter which produced it is dissolved for ever! Soon we saw the spire of Stratford church, and then the town itself, with its pretty little river. Nobody would ever have heard either of the town or the river, beyond their neighbourhood, were it

not for the name of Shakspeare, who has conferred a never-dying fame upon both. Stratford is now a place of pilgrimage, like the grave of Washington, at Mount Vernon. They are worthy to be mentioned together, for one is the birth-place of the first of poets; the other, the tomb of the first of men. Our countryman, Irving, has lately given so pleasing an account of this place, and all the localities connected with the life of the poet, that I will not attempt any thing of the kind; for it would only be repeating what another has said much better.

From hence to Warwick, where every body knows there is one of the finest castles, or *show-places*, in this country. It is remarkable for some pretended reliques of the champion *Guy*, who, judging from his porridge pot, was a great hero, at least in trencher feats. You have no doubt seen views of this castle, as it is in all the picturesque works; and if you have not, it is impossible to convey any likeness in words. What amused me most was, the honest country people I occasionally conversed with, who repeated, with an air of most credulous gravity, all the enormous tales recorded of this renowned trencher-man, Sir Guy, whose legendary feats in valorous fight, and valorous eating, are all authenticated by a statue, at *Guy's Cliff*, in the neighbourhood, of most gigantic proportions.

From Warwick I passed the castle of Kenilworth, which has lately been dug out of its ruins by the indefatigable pen of the "Great Unknown." It is a fine ruin, overgrown with ivy; the comparatively modern additions of the Earl of Leicester are gone to decay, while the more ancient still subsist in tolerable preservation. Rout, and revel, and beer-drinking, bear-baiting, and other royal sports, are here succeeded by silence, decay, and

desolation. These castles formed the links of that vast feudal chain which bound the people of the middle ages. They are fast disappearing from the land, and let them go : they swallowed up the cottages, and held the cottagers in bondage.

Passing some fine seats, I now came in sight of Coventry, famous for Peeping Tom, and ribbon weaving. It is an old city ; and all the old cities I have ever seen, except Oxford, that have not been burnt down two or three times at least, are, to my mind, very ugly. The streets of Coventry are narrow, inconvenient, and dirty ; the houses gloomy, and the people bear the indelible marks of a manufacturing town. Soon after leaving this place, which is regularly anathematized by all picturesque tourists, the country became flat, and apparently volcanic ; for all around, I could see the columns of black, malignant, manufacturing smoke curling to the skies, or flattening and spreading over the landscape.

Approaching Birmingham, I breathed the very essence of coal-smoke, which lowered over the pretty, smart new country boxes of the manufacturers. I had passed through this town before, on my way to London, but as I was in haste to deliver my ***** , made no stay here. On this occasion, however, I spent several days in viewing the manufactories, and making inquiries, as to the effects of the system upon the morals, manners, and health of the people engaged in them. The general result of all my experience, observation, and inquiry, I shall perhaps give you, in a letter particularly devoted to the subject, which is just now of peculiar interest in our country. I found every thing at a stand here ; the manufacturers dispirited ; the workmen ragged, starving, and disaffected ; the whole town complaining. Nothing, in fact, can present a more miserable spectacle, than a place arrested in a

course of almost unparalleled prosperity, by those unaccountable mutations which turn the tide of commerce into new channels, and, while they throw thousands out of employment and bread, produce premature decay, and modern ruins. The most common appearance here, is that of beggary ; the rarest, a clean face and hands.

Skirting the borders of Worcestershire, Staffordshire, and Shropshire, the country was beautiful, and some of the views highly picturesque as well as extensive. In many parts of Staffordshire especially, the appearance of innumerable furnaces gave the country at night a most singular aspect. It seemed that Mr. Hutton's subterranean fire was bursting forth in every direction, and that the whole interior of the earth was teeming with combustible matter. I had a view of the Leasowes and Hagley, two beautiful spots ; the one connected with the genius, taste, and prodigality of Shenstone ; the other, with the name of Lyttelton. The latter place has been fruitful in distinguished characters. Their beauties are familiar to the imagination of most general readers in our country, and so I pass them by. I visited Colebrooke Dale, which is in the way to Shrewsbury, and where Vulcan and the Cyclops resort. Every thing is iron here ; there is an iron bridge ; the seats are iron ; and the men who sit on them are either iron or steel, I could not tell which. The eternal clink of hammers, the roaring of the forges, and the columns of thick black smoke, render this place particularly detestable to ears and eyes of common sensibility. If they ever catch me there again, I'll give them full leave, as Shakspeare says, "to hammer me into a twigger bottle."

From Colebrooke Dale, winding along the " Noble Severn," which may be about as wide as our Thames at Norwich, in Connecticut, I was highly pleased with the pretty scenery of the little ba-

sin through which the river passes. In getting to the city, however, it was necessary to mount an eminence, whence I had a clear view of the mountains of North Wales. On the other hand, was a fine hill, called the Wrekin, rising pretty abruptly out of a great plain and richly clothed with verdure. I afterwards climbed to the top, in an excursion from Shrewsbury, and was gratified with a view that paid me for the labour, which is more than I can say of many others. I arrived at that city about five in the afternoon, crossing a second time by a grand bridge over the Severn, which almost flows round the whole hill on which Shrewsbury is built.

I had two particular objects in view, which induced me to spend three or four days at Shrewsbury : one was to see the prison, which is conducted and governed pretty much according to the system proposed by Mr. Howard, and combines with it a house of correction ; the other was, to inspect the House of Industry, which is considered one of the most luxurious receptacles of idleness and beggary in this country. Having made the necessary arrangements, I accordingly first visited the prison. The area within the walls contains about two acres of ground ; you enter by the Porter's Lodge, over the gate of which is a bust of Mr. Howard, that benevolent man and inflexible father ! The ground floor on the left is occupied by the turnkey's rooms, above which are his bed-chambers ; that on the right is occupied by the lazaretto, where is a hot and cold bath, an oven to fumigate clothes, which are taken from the prisoners, and a prison uniform put on them. Other rooms upstairs are appropriated to the performance of the last offices for criminals by the clergy, previously to execution on the flat roof above. The debtors, male and female, female felons, capital male fe-

lons, petty male felons, women of ill fame and vagrants, male and female disorderly servants, and apprentices, male vagrants and deserters, are each accommodated with a spacious court, day-rooms and sleeping-rooms, so that it is quite a luxury to be here. In addition to these, there are two courts for male and female refractory prisoners, together with a detached infirmary, with separate courts, day-rooms, and sleeping-rooms : in short, my dear brother, beyond all doubt, a large proportion of the prisoners here are better lodged, better fed, and better clothed, than they were at home. In fact, nine out of ten, of the people of England, do not spend as much as it costs to maintain a pauper here. All this is pretty enough in theory, and looks very like humanity ; but I dare only shake my head at it, and say nothing. If people will divert the laws from their original intention, and make that, in effect, a reward, which was intended, and ought to be, a punishment ; if they will build palaces for felons and paupers to revel in at the expense of honest industry, why nothing is to be said against humanity, which, under pretence of tenderness to the worthless and unprincipled, pardons the wretch who is only liberated to commit new crimes, or feeds and lodges him in infinite comfort, at the expense of the society he has offended. Experience and not argument must cure these indiscreet gambols of philanthropists. It will not be long before they discover that they are only heaping coals of fire upon the heads of thousands, in the remote hope of reclaiming one, and offering premiums to vice and immorality. If Mrs. Fry will bribe women of ill fame to reformation, by supporting them comfortably, while thousands of wives and mothers, who never wallowed in scenes of corruption, but have worked their fingers to the bone, to keep themselves and their children from

want, are pining in hopeless and obscure wretchedness ; let her do it, I say again. Instead of offering premiums to virtue, she is proposing temptations to vice, since it seems women must first become infamous in society, in order to entitle themselves to her notice and bounty. No wonder, my dear brother, that vice should thrive, poverty multiply, and prodigality and idleness increase here, under this new system of patronage. But the voice of warning is the voice of one crying in the wilderness; or if it be heard, it is only heard for the purpose of bringing the charge of inhumanity against him who uttered the warning. It is not difficult to predict the result of all these injudicious measures. When the very end of these punishments, which is to deter from the repetition of crime, by the recollection of the sufferings and privation the commission brings with it, is perverted, and houses of correction or prisons are converted into abodes more comfortable than the homes of the offenders, rather than schools of infliction, offences must multiply. The fear of the repetition of suffering, is the strongest safeguard against the repetition of crimes; and if the state-prison discipline in our country has not proved effectual, it is because the inhabitants of those prisons want nothing but liberty, and are in the almost certain hope of enjoying that, if they live. Two great evils result from this relaxed state of prison discipline, this habit of devoting ourselves to deploring and pampering, instead of stigmatizing and punishing the guilty. Crimes are now called misfortunes ; and that barrier of virtue, which is erected in the human heart by early instilling into it a keen detestation of vice, is broken down by the fashion of softening names, and apologizing for the most heinous transgressions. In the hope of alleviating human misery, we ought not to introduce the habit of tolerating crimes, nor, in the ef-

fervescence of our philanthropic enthusiasm, ought we to forget, that in proportion as we lose our disgust and hatred towards the guilty, we narrow the distinction between the guilty and the innocent, and in the same degree, indirectly destroy the value of the possession of innocence. It may be said, that conscience will punish the guilty and reward the innocent. I doubt it much; for of all the people in the world, the hardened villain, fortified by a repetition of crimes, suffers the least from the stings of his conscience. Another of the future ill effects of this undue relaxation towards criminals, will be, most probably, a complete conviction of its futility, demonstrated by the vast increase of crimes. The human mind will then take the opposite bias, and the criminal code become as bloody as it is now bloodless. In short, let me conclude this unpremeditated discussion, with remarking, that prisons and penitentiaries were never intended for schools of morality, any further than as exemplary punishment operates to prevent the repetition of crimes.

The result, thus far, of this experiment at Shrewsbury, coincides with these notions of mine. Petty crimes multiply according to the temptations offered, and notwithstanding the pains taken to class these beings in the scale of corruption, as well as to keep them from contaminating each other, as might be expected, they come out worse than they went in, and with rather a disposition to repeat an offence which is attended with such pleasant consequences. I could see the people about this prison were hopeless of the experiment; and, for my own part, I am neither afraid nor ashamed to say, that I believe the crusade of Mr. Howard through prisons and dungeons, for the benefit of his countrymen, has been injurious to the best interests of mankind, inasmuch as the

fame which followed his enterprise, has tempted weak or enthusiastic men and women to attempt to follow his path, without either his humanity or his discretion.

There is a talk of an effort to be made in Parliament, for ameliorating the criminal code, and particularly as regards the punishment of death for forgery. The principal argument I have heard urged among the advocates of this measure, some of whom were members of Parliament, was, that the vast increase of forgeries of late years proved, that examples of capital punishment had little or no effect in deterring others from committing the crime. If this argument prove any thing, it proves, not the necessity of remitting the penalty, but the making it, if possible, still more severe. If the fear of an ignominious death be insufficient to deter a man from the commission of a crime, what hold has society upon him, what restraint can be devised for the purpose? He is, in effect, an outlaw, since all laws are insufficient to prevent his being an enemy to society. Perpetual imprisonment is the substitute proposed; solitary confinement and hard labour. If these punishments are more severe than death itself, then there is nothing gained on the score of humanity; if they are not, then they will not operate equally in producing the two great ends of punishment, preventing the repetition of crime in the criminal, and deterring others from following his example. Our own experience, at home, sufficiently indicates the turn generally given to this perpetual imprisonment. The villain turns hypocrite; affects the most exemplary penitence; works on the compassion of the keeper, who recommends him to the inspectors, who present him to the chief magistrate, intrusted with the prerogative of mercy, who lets him loose

again for the most part to prey upon society. I hardly know of a single instance, where a sentence of perpetual imprisonment did not terminate in this manner. Is it natural, my dear brother, that a punishment, affording so many loopholes for hope to peep out at, can be as effectual in preventing crime, as the certainty of death in case of discovery and conviction? I think not; and whatever inference may be drawn from these remarks to the prejudice of my humanity, my heart sorrows under the conviction, that the experiment of penitentiary punishments, so beautiful in theory, so consoling to humanity, will eventually end in the establishment of a criminal code, erring on the other extreme. To put villains together, where they can actually engender new modes of corruption, is to educate them, as it were, for new crimes, when they return to society. To confine them in solitary cells will be, in effect, to prevent them from practising any trade or business, and thus render them a dead burthen upon society for their maintenance. It would not probably last long, however; since to condemn to perpetual solitude ignorant persons, without habits of contemplation, mental employments, or mental resources, to while away the dead uniformity of their days, would, most assuredly, soon put an end to their existence; or, if they lived, would turn them either into confirmed idiots or incurable madmen. Nothing then would be gained by this mode of punishment, on the score of humanity to the guilty, and most assuredly nothing on that of security to society at large, arising from the effect of example upon the innocent or the guilty.

Since my return from this excursion into Wales, a motion has been made, and carried against the ministers, for the purpose of beginning a general,

supposed reformation in the criminal code. It appears to me, that nothing could be weaker than the arguments of Mr. Buxton, whose speech in support of Sir James Mackintosh, the mover, has been noticed in terms of high admiration. He adduced many single cases in support of his great point, to wit, that the punishment of death did not operate to the prevention of crime. Nothing gives me a meaner opinion of a statesman, than to see him quoting a few solitary examples in support of his cause, rather than resorting to general principles; and drawing conclusions from particular cases, instead of from those universal characteristics and motives of action, that never change. Yet this is the way in which they almost all of them argue a question here.

But Mr. Buxton went further, and quoted a case, which, if true, was certainly one of the most extraordinary in the world. It was that of a banker's clerk, a very honest lad it would seem, who was actually tempted to commit a forgery, only by accidentally seeing a man executed for that crime. Here is a new doctrine, brother! This is the first time I ever heard it gravely stated, even in the British parliament, where they deal in pretty sizeable absurdities sometimes, that the sight of a wretch hanging by the neck in the mid air, and kicking his heels in the agonies of excruciating torture, before an assembled multitude, who feel neither sympathy nor compassion at his fate, was calculated to allure a spectator to the commission of a crime, which almost inevitably brings with it this ignominious punishment. Such an incredible absurdity as this is neither creditable to humanity, nor the friend of humanity. Should the torrent of sympathy for crimes thus continue to flow on, and increase as it flows, is there not reason to fear, my dear brother, that we

shall, before long, hear some worshipful magistrate, appointed to administer the laws, arguing the cases of criminals after the manner of Justice Nihil?

Parum. Here's one accused of cutting a purse.

Nihil. Accused? Is that enough? If it be guilt to be accused, who shall be innocent? Discharge him, Parum.

Parum. Here's another brought for the same fact; taken in the very action.

Nihil. Alas! it was for need; bid him take warning, and so discharge him too. 'Tis the first time.

Parum. Sir, here's a known offender, one that has been stocked and whipped innumerable times; has suffered Bridewell often; not a jail but he's familiar with; burnt in the hand, forehead, and shoulder; both ears cut off, with his nose slit—what shall I do with him?

Nihil. So often punished? Nay, if no correction will serve his turn, e'en let him run his course. Discharge him, in God's name—may be he will reform.

Parum. Here's one apprehended for murder; he killed a man last night.

Nihil. How came it to pass?

Parum. Upon a falling out, sir.

Nihil. They shall shake hands and be friends; I'll reconcile them, Parum.

Parum. One of them is dead.

Nihil. Is he not buried yet?

Parum. No, sir.

Nihil. Why then I say, they shall shake hands and be friends."

To be serious, my dear brother, if philanthropy thus continues to hold the shield before rogues, I see no other way in which the lives and property

of those, for whose protection alone society was first instituted, can be safe, but by imitating those excellent times, when the honest peasantry paid *black mail* to the *Rob Roys*, and bought protection, not from the civil power, but by secretly leaguering with bands of freebooters. These last seem to be the favourite heroes of the day, and are in a fair way to supersede the common-place people, who merely defend the rights of their country, and support its laws. In good time we shall probably see the calendar of modern saints filled with robbers, like St. George of England, and the public funeral of a murderer followed up by his apotheosis.

From the prison, I was carried to what I supposed to be a palace, beautifully situated on a lofty bank, and overlooking one of the finest prospects imaginable. Concluding there was some mistake, I begged to be conducted to the Poor House. My guide, with an air of great self-complacency, assured me this was the Poor House, and that it cost, first and last, above twenty thousand pounds sterling. It is a superb building, affording such luxurious lodgings and excellent accommodations, that I was not surprised people preferred living there in idleness and luxury, to working hard at home and faring indifferently. In looking over the books, and seeing the vast quantity of provisions, the number of fat beeves slaughtered for the entertainment of these sumptuous beggars, I no longer wondered that beggary was grown so respectable a trade. It is quite natural that the people of England should be degraded into paupers, when they are thus actually seduced into idleness, by the tempting prospect of good living and good lodging, instead of being deterred by the certainty of want, and all its train of ills. Is this humanity, is this charity? thought I. Is

it thus, that the happiness of human beings is brought about, by tempting them from labour and economy by the prospect of indulgence and plenty, at the expense of others? Is it thus that children are prepared to encounter the labours to which their birth renders them liable, by being pampered in this splendid eating-house? I put some of these questions to those about me, and never got a civil word afterwards. These people share in the good things, and grow rich on charities. It is a fine thing, brother, to manage the concerns of the poor in this country. I wish some one would have the honest hardihood to speak of these institutions as they deserve; risk the reputation of a philanthropist in the attempt to restrain the progress of idleness and beggary, and rid the industrious of the task, not only of supplying their own wants, but of pampering those of others. He might be a martyr to his honesty, but I am mistaken if posterity would not do him justice. I shall have additional opportunities of witnessing the effects of these institutions and societies, and may possibly resume the subject by and by. There were about four hundred persons here; and the children looked very delicate as well as genteel; but, take my word for it, this was not the place to prepare them for household servants, industrious tradesmen and farmers, hardy sailors or soldiers, or for any of those occupations that generally fall to the lot of the children of the poor. Besides this, there are free-schools, charity-schools, almshouses, an infirmary, &c. so that the people who can descend to live, or learn upon charity, have an easy time of it there. But for all this, it is, according to some of the philosophical writers of the day, exceedingly strange, that the quantity of distress increases in a ratio with the encouragement afforded to idleness and beggary! Sensible:

that I am here treading on ticklish ground, I shall fortify myself with the authority of Doctor Franklin. No one can call in question the humanity of him, who was emphatically the friend of man and of human nature. So long ago as the year 1766, the following sentiments appeared in a letter written by Franklin, in the character of an English farmer, and published in an English paper. The Doctor was then residing in London.

“ I am for doing good to the poor, but I differ in opinion about the means. I think the best way of doing good to the poor, is not by making them easy *in* poverty, but leading or driving them *out* of it. In my youth I travelled much, and I observed in different countries, that the more provisions were made for the poor, the less they provided for themselves, and of course became poorer. And on the contrary, the less was done for them, the more they did for themselves, and became the richer. There is no country where so many provisions are established for them, so many hospitals to receive them when they are sick or lame, founded and maintained by private charities; so many alms-houses for the aged of both sexes, together with a solemn general law, made by the rich to subject their estates to a heavy tax for the support of the poor. Under all these obligations are our poor modest, humble, and thankful? And do they use their best endeavours to maintain themselves, and lighten our shoulders of this burthen? On the contrary, I affirm, that there is no country in the world, in which the poor are more idle, dissolute, drunken, and insolent. The day you passed that act, you took away from before their eyes the greatest of all inducements to industry, frugality, and sobriety, by giving them a dependence on somewhat else, than a careful accumulation during youth and health, for support in age

or sickness. In short, you offered a premium for the encouragement of idleness, and you should not wonder that it has had its effect in the increase of poverty. Repeal that law, and you will soon see a change in their manners. *Saint Monday* and *Saint Tuesday* will soon cease to be holidays. *Six days shalt thou labour*, though one of the old commandments long treated as out of date, will again be looked upon as a respectable precept; industry will increase, and with it plenty among the lower orders; their circumstances will mend, *and more will be done for their happiness, by insuring them to provide for themselves, than would be done by dividing all your estates among them.*"

So wrote our sage more than fifty years ago. It will be seen, on a close inspection, that the above passage condenses all the substance of those articles, which have lately appeared as original authority against the poor laws, in the *Edinburgh Review*. But "who reads an American book?" O, not the British Reviewers, certainly!

LETTER VIII.

London.

DEAR BROTHER,

By the advice of mine host of the Talbot, who prided himself on "serving the noble Earl of Shrewsbury," I left my horses here, and hired a couple of Welsh ponies, which, he assured me, would carry me much more safely over the mountains and through the defiles of Wales. He likewise hinted, that a Welsh pony had a sort of instinctive feeling of the picturesque, and never failed to stop where there was a fine view, so that there would be no occasion to carry a guide-book with me. I took his advice, and accordingly bestrode a pony that turned out to be broken-winded. This, however, proved in the end a great advantage, for whenever I dismounted to scramble up a precipice, or view a cascade in some glen, unapproachable on horseback, I was always sure of finding him exactly in the same place on my return, he being never guilty of any voluntary locomotion whatever.

Some of the picturesque hunters make their tours on foot, but I had two invincible objections to this mode. I hate walking, and should have been as long getting through Wales, as a Welsh pedigree. In the next place, I was aware, from experience, that a man on foot never gets a civil

answer or civil treatment at a decent British inn. The first salute will be from the chambermaid, who, on being questioned about a bed, will go near to snap your head off. This is particularly the case about Shrewsbury, where the women, having a little of the hot Welsh blood in them, are apt to be somewhat *shrewish*, whence, possibly, may be derived the name of this ancient city. On one occasion, in Herefordshire, I was very much amused with a respectable, though plain looking man, who came up on foot to an inn, where I had stopt to dine, and ordered dinner. Nobody invited him into the house, and he was permitted to sit on the piazza, until I was wrought upon to ask him into the room I occupied. Contrary to my expectation, for I concluded this piece of civility would make him suspect me of a design to pick his pocket, it is so uncommon in this country, he accepted the invitation very frankly, and I found him exceedingly intelligent and well-bred. To tell you the truth, I began to suspect *him*, it being so unnatural for an Englishman to be entertaining without the hope of advantage. However, no dinner came, or was likely to come, when, after a delay of an hour or two, an elegant equipage drove up to the door, preceded by an outrider, who inquired if a gentleman, whom he described, had stopped there. An explanation ensued, and I found that the carriage having received some little damage, the owner, the plain gentleman I spoke of, had taken it into his head to walk on to this hospitable inn. Never were there such civilities, such bows, such *congees*, and such inquiries, about what the gentleman would choose for dinner, and such apologies for the delay, which was all put upon the cook. The gentleman, who seemed somewhat of a sly humourist, upon this insisted upon the cook's head

being well singed, and made into a stew for his dinner. This brought up the cook, who, in spite of the landlord's menacing looks, told, what was no doubt the truth, that no dinner had been ordered. The incognito then, pulling out his watch, observed that it was now too late to cook a dinner, and he would go on to the next inn to sup and sleep. The landlord was in despair, and the chambermaid almost bit off the end of her thumb, on the occasion. Previously to his departure, we exchanged addresses, and the stranger took my promise to visit him, should I ever pass his mansion, which was in a distant part of the country. Though it is probable we shall never meet again, I shall always feel grateful to him for not taking me for a sharper, because I was civil to a stranger.

Having furnished myself with a map and portfolio, I set forth from Shrewsbury one bright morning, for the land of promise, which I had come so far to visit. Previously to this, I had brightened up my rusty genealogy, and traced my descent pretty clearly from Adam, which is considered a tolerable pedigree in Wales, though nothing to make a boast of. Blood, brother, blood is every thing here. In the words of an old writer, which I quote because I am fairly tired of every new one,—“You shall ever find amongst a hundred Frenchmen forty hot shots; amongst a hundred Spaniards threescore braggarts; amongst a hundred Dutchmen fourscore drunkards;— amongst a hundred Englishmen fourscore and ten madmen; and amongst a hundred Welshmen fourscore and nineteen gentlemen!” Some of the family trees there took root long before the flood. I must not omit to apprise you, that I was still accompanied by the Professor of languages, whose services as an interpreter I found necessary in

crossing through some of the shires, where they speak a tongue not to be found in the German professor's book, that enumerates six or seven thousand. To one, who in America has been accustomed to hear the commonest people speak with the fluency and almost the correctness of a gentleman, it is intolerable to listen to the *haw haw-ing* and *yaw yawing* of these terribly thick-headed fellows, who, with all their really good qualities, and these are many, are most stupidly deficient in ideas, and possess no language to express the few they have. I long to get among the sprightly, saucy Americans, whose tongues run like mill-tails, and whose brains are the inexhaustible reservoirs that keep the mill-clappers going.

Passing Oswestry, a neat town, I came to a small brook, called the *river* Carriac, rolling through a deep glen, and there first entered Denbighshire, the frontier county in this part of North Wales. The first object that attracted my attention, was ***** castle, belonging to one of the ***** , who here, as in our own country, are people of figure. From the ascent leading to this castle, there is one of the first fine views, comprehending seventeen counties, and bounded by the Wrekin, Clay Hills, and various other picturesque mountains. A servant came out to us in the park, but rather with a view to watch our motions, I believe, than to show the grounds, for he stuck right close to our heels, without pointing out any thing to notice. Being thirsty, I asked for a drink of water, but, according to the information of our spy, there was not a drop in or about this grand place. I could not help recollecting, that I had, hundreds of times in travelling, called at a house, in our little New England, not a twentieth part as large as this stately castle, for a glass of water, and been asked if I would not

rather take a glass of milk or cider, without any remote expectation of being paid for this accustomed civility. I remembered also to have heard from good authority, that in the southern states, if a respectable looking stranger were seen reconnoitering a house in the country, he would most certainly be offered every civility by the master or his servants. But the time is long past, when there was so much honesty, and so much confidence between man and man in this country, that a stranger could visit and sojourn with a stranger three days, without being asked who he was, whence he came, or whither he was going. I was not therefore disappointed at this churlishness; for I knew enough of Great Britain to be aware, that if a gentleman were to practise such hospitality, he would not only be eaten out of house and home by visitors, but, in addition to this, would be plundered by sharpers in the garb of gentlemen. It is, therefore, not in the nature of things, for them to be hospitable, according to our notions. All I mean to say is, that while this state of things continues, the less they boast of the hospitality of Old England, the better. Spring-guns and man-traps are the welcomes prepared for strangers on English ground.

From the castle we gained the road, which divides towards Chester on the one hand, and Llangollan on the other. The name of the latter being familiar to me, as abounding in rural beauties, I turned in that direction, and after riding about seven miles, came to the village of Llangollan, which is worth going seven miles to avoid. It is, however, useful to the lovers of the picturesque, as forming a perfect contrast with the scenery in the vicinity, which is embellished by the river Dee, and various other beautiful objects. And here, my dear brother, before I proceed another

step, I must apprise you, that you are not to expect me to mention the name of every place I attempt to sketch for your amusement. The Welsh names, when spoken, are musical enough; but wo to the man, unless he be a descendant of Caractacus, who attempts to pronounce them as they are written! The easiest of them are such as Craig, Eglwyseg, Llechweddgarth, and St. Collen ap Gwynnawg ap Clydawg ap Cowdra ap Caradog Freichfas ap Lleyr Merim ap Einion Yrth ap Cunedda Wledig! the name of one single Welsh saint, the patron of a church in this neighbourhood.

On arriving at Llangollan, I trusted to instinct for the choice of an inn, and, as ill fate would have it, came to the sign of the Open Hand, which looked like an indication of liberality. My experience, however, demonstrated to me afterwards, that this Hand was open to receive, not to bestow; and that it was a very grasping hand. The first object that attracts the eye of a stranger at Llangollan, is *Dinas Bran*, consisting of a few remains of what appears once to have been an extensive castle. Having rested myself a little, I sallied forth, book in hand, to pay it a visit. Tradition records, that as long ago as the middle of the thirteenth century, which, however, is but as yesterday in Wales, this castle afforded a refuge to Gryffydd ap Madoc, Mr. Southey's hero, who discovered America, and settled a Welsh colony somewhere. Here too, more than a century after, lived a beautiful maid of the House of Tudor, who was beloved by an illustrious bard, whose name occurs in Gray's fine ode, as 'High born Hoel.' Myfanway Vechan, for that was her name, it seems was content to receive the homage of the bard, and often listened to his harp and song, which was heard at all times of the night in this charming valley.

Sometimes he tuned his harp to the warlike exploits of the Tudors and the Hoels, in old times compeers in battle, and, in his prophetic inspiration, predicted that the former would one day give kings to the Isle. At others he sung the joys and the pains of love: he painted the hopes of the lover as he won the smile of his mistress, his despair at her frown or indifference; the elysium of success, and the agony of disappointment. The lady listened, but she did not love; at least, she only loved his music and his poetry: her hand was destined for princes. She married a Tudor, and her descendants fulfilled the prophecy of the bard. Hoel wandered away with his harp, through the wildest and most unfrequented parts of the country, sometimes frenzied and sometimes forlorn; in his lucid hours singing the falsehood of his mistress, and his own unalterable love. One of these songs is still extant, and, it is said, is exquisitely affecting. In one of the paroxysms of his frenzy, he foretold the subjugation of his country; and having finished, he broke his harp in the sight of some astonished peasants, and precipitated himself from a high rock into a torrent that carried him no one knew whither. It is probable this story, which I heard, not at Llangollan, but in one of the most sequestered parts of the country I afterwards visited, suggested to Gray the fine picture of his bard plunging into "Conway's foaming flood." There are plenty of these little historical romances connected with the old ruins in different parts of Wales, and it is from such that the latter derive a great portion of their interest. The hill, on which these ruins lie, is estimated at 1800 feet high, and commands a prospect finer than that from the higher mountains, though, of course, not so extensive. In fact, every one that has had experience in these matters knows that views, bound-

ed only by the powers of human vision, are neither so beautiful nor so gratifying as those which are circumscribed by picturesque outlines. I have often had finer views from the base of a mountain than its extreme summit, where every thing was confused and indistinct.

The whole of this vale and adjacent country is full of fine rural beauties, and abounds with interesting local associations. I wandered from the centre of the village, almost every day, for four or five days, in different directions, and every where found objects and combinations of objects, that attracted my attention. Among others, I one day stumbled by chance upon the site of Owen Glendower's palace, which is marked by a clump of old trees growing on an eminence. Glendower, like almost every man of great abilities in those days, at least among the Welsh, was reputed by the English a magician: if Glendower escaped their snares, or gave them a defeat, they saved their credit by ascribing both one and the other to the aid of necromancy. The ignorant, in an age of ignorance, are prone to believe this, for they have in their own minds and resources nothing that can enable them to comprehend the powers of a great genius. Glendower, after baffling the arts of the English, and fighting with his neighbour, Grey of Ruthyn, about boundaries and what not, for many years, finding himself overmatched, retired into private life, and died quietly in his bed, I believe. He left three daughters, one of whom married an ancestor of that Scudamore, whose descendant I mentioned as the friend of Pope. His posterity is numerous still, and connected, in various ways, with many of the first families in Great Britain. But he is best known, and will for ever remain best known, as associated with the Henry Percy and the Douglas, in the imperishable works of

Shakspeare. It is from that circumstance alone, that I have been induced to sketch this little biography. The name of Owen Glendower would never have been familiar to every body in our country, had it not been mentioned by the bard, who has given many passports to immortality.

Having spent several days at Llangollan, roaming and rambling about with infinite satisfaction, I returned by the way of Chirck Castle, on the road to which, I should have mentioned the famous Offa's Dyke, said to be the ancient boundary between England and Wales. It might be the boundary between two wheat fields, or vineyards, for it is sufficiently insignificant. From hence I proceeded towards the river Dee; crossed it by a bridge in a deep vale or ravine, and reconnoitred Wynnestay, which is a noble seat of Sir Watkyns Williams Wynn, and, as the talk goes, is soon to be consecrated by the presence of no less a visiter than king George. This will be matter for the Wynns to talk about as long as there is half a one left. I then turned towards Wrexham, which has nothing but a tower steeple to recommend it. From thence to Gressford; and after stopping to view a fine prospect, through Shropshire and Cheshire, crossed the Dee to the ancient and certainly very curious city of Chester, which I visited previously to continuing my picturesque tour, for the purpose of *****.

Chester is one of the most respectable old cities I have ever seen: there is an air of originality about it too, that makes it quite an object of interest. It does not appear to have much business; yet, from being the residence of many opulent families, not only natives, but from Ireland and the neighbouring Wales, it has not that intolerable air of decay and total stagnation, which I have generally observed in those ancient dozing places.

The people seemed actually inclined to politeness, which was quite new to me ; and there were various genteel amusements for evenings, that are always a great relief to a stranger. Nobody ever carries an umbrella here, as the covered galleries that extend all along the streets on either side, like piazzas, jutting out from the second story, afford a safe walk for foot-passengers. Nevertheless, I was assured that a cunning fellow, a real John Bull, observing there was no umbrella-maker in all the city, thought to make a fortune by commencing the business. He succeeded wonderfully ; for, though he failed in business, he became entitled to the privileges of pauperism, which are now beginning to be considered by the common people equivalent to a freehold. The walk on the rampart of Chester, is a most singular and delightful promenade. In short, brother, there is more novelty in old Chester, than in many of the new towns in England. There is a cathedral, but old, and rather uninteresting. A castle too, but it is gone to decay. Let it go—they are only memorials of feudal wars and feudal slavery ; and wherever they abound, one may be sure there is oppression on the one hand, and suffering on the other. They were among the strongest links in the chain of feudal slavery, and stood as monuments of the abject situation of the people, whose labour was employed at the will of the liege-lord, in erecting these strong holds, by the possession of which he was the better enabled to keep them in subjection. The late royal residence of Windsor Castle is indebted for its magnitude and massive magnificence, to labourers impressed from all parts of the kingdom, by the mere prerogative of the king. Indeed I am inclined to believe, there never was any age of the world so overrated, as that called the age of chivalry. If we analyze it

closely, what rude manners, what barbarous customs, what a chain of slavery and oppression shall we find! Petty tyrants perpetually at war with each other—murder and usurpation cherished as the highest titles to heroism and glory—vassals crushed beneath the despotism of an ignorant and ferocious liege-lord; at the same time retorting this oppression with ample interest upon wretched vassals less powerful, who, in their turn, carried their abuse of power even to the abodes of abject penury, where resided the serfs, whose iron collars proclaimed them, like other beasts, the property of a brutal master. It was a galling chain, the links of which extended from the lowest serf of the field to the sovereign, whose authority was limited only by his power, and who, destitute of that, became the victim, or the slave of his slave.

In that age a man was of far less value than the beast he rode. I have read that Hugh Dechamps Fleury, a French bishop, gave five serfs, three men, and two women, for a horse, that he might enter his diocess well mounted. In those days, too, christian white people were sold to slavery in Africa, the place which now supplies the rest of the world with slaves. In fact, this system of feudal despotism had communicated brutality to manners, sanctified ignorance, and given to guilt and power full latitude, by the certainty of impunity. Power and right were the same—the strongest was ever in the right, and the art of combat the only one in repute. To guide the horse, wield the spear and sword, obtained the preference over the most estimable virtues, as well as the most brilliant accomplishments. That this age exhibits examples of heroic virtues and splendid actions, is not to be denied; but, beyond all doubt, it is indebted for most of our admiration to the early impressions, produced by the exaggerations of romance, and the embellishments of poetry.

LETTER IX.

London.

DEAR BROTHER,

FROM Chester I again penetrated into Wales, passing along the borders of Flintshire, a small county, apparently pretty much divided among marshes and mountains. The old capital lies buried in a marsh along the river Dee, and Holywell is now the principal mart of this part of the country. The neighbourhood contains a great many manufactories, and is, of course, distressed and disaffected. Holywell, like all the manufacturing towns I have seen, is tinged with black smoke, and presents a disagreeable aspect. Below the town is a glen, where the manufactories are placed, on a fine stream flowing from St. Winifred's well, which, I believe, has lost all its medicinal virtues, ever since the waters were prostituted to these mechanical purposes. The mills and manufactories are principally for brass and copper; and it is hardly possible for me to describe the wretched, cadaverous, and unwholesome looks of the workmen in these metals. One might almost be tempted to conclude that the conveniences of life were too dearly purchased at the expense of such unhealthy employments. I felt grateful to Providence, that our countrymen were, as yet, permitted to exchange the fruits of labours that

result in health, manliness, and virtuous independence, for the products of occupations so fatal to all these.

The famous well of St. Winifred, from whence is derived the name of Holywell, is the finest gush of water from one single source that I have ever seen. It springs at one bound from the foot of a fine rock, and in a single volume, that, at a short distance below, without any accession that I observed, turned all the mills employed in the manufactories. The well is covered with a little venerable Gothic building, said to be an offering of gratitude from Margaret, mother of Henry VII. for her recovery through the virtues of this well. The inside of the little canopy is exquisitely carved. Many votive offerings of crutches, &c. are left here by invalids of former times, in memory of their recovery to the use of their limbs, some of whose stories are perfectly miraculous. But the miracle of all miracles is the history of the saint herself. Winifred was a devout and beautiful damsel, daughter of *one* Thearth, as we say of obscure persons, and niece to St. Benno, another rather obscure person. Having obtained leave to found a church upon the possessions of her father, the saint took her under his tuition, and instructed her in religion. Crodorus, son to a very obscure king, one also who reigned in this neighbourhood, being smitten with her beauty, according to the customs of the age, attempted to violate her person. She ran towards the Church for sanctuary, but was overtaken at the brow of the hill by this gallant British prince, who, enraged at his disappointment, cut off her head, which rolled down the hill to the place where the congregation were kneeling at their devotions. From the spot where it stopped, immediately gushed forth a clear and beautiful fountain; and thereupon St. Benno, taking up the head, and joining it to the

body, to the surprise of all, the virgin became re-animated, nothing remaining to mark the separation but a white ring round the neck. Crodorus dropped down upon the spot where he committed the outrage; but, whether he was swallowed up by the earth, or carried away by the devil, the legend rather doubts. It is affirmed that the sides of the orifice, whence the waters issued, became all at once fringed with a green and sweet-scented moss, and the stones at the bottom tintured with the blood of the virgin. She outlived the cutting off her head about fifteen years, and, having taken the veil, died abbess of Gwytherin, in this country.

The well became famous for its sweet-scented moss, the bloody tint of the rocks, and the miraculous virtues of its waters. The sick and the pious resorted to it from all parts of the neighbourhood; and the votive crutches and barrows announce the recovery of some at least, whether by faith, or the workings of the waters, cannot be known. Of late years, however, it has not been much frequented. Industry and employment, most potent enemies to superstitious fancies, have called the attention of the people from legends and saints, while the clink of hammers, the turning of wheels, and the roaring of bellows, have all combined to banish the silent musings of wayward imagination. Either the water, the human mind, or the human constitution, has altered, for no cures are now worked by the miraculous well of St. Winifred. The moss and the blood-tinged stones, it is true, remain, but they have ceased to excite wonder, ever since the prying curiosity of botanists discovered that the former was nothing more than the mere vulgar *jungermannius asplenoides*, and the latter the *byssus joliferus*, a little red fibrous plant, which is common at the bottom

of our pure mountain brooks. Nevertheless, it is a fine curiosity, inasmuch as it gushes forth upwards of eighty hogsheads of water a minute, which never freezes, nor ever varies in quantity, under any change of seasons. After all, my dear brother, what business have we to laugh at the credulity of our ancestors, or pride ourselves upon our disenchantment from the wonders of St. Winifred's well, while half the world is buying quack medicines, and trusting to quack doctors? I am somewhat apprehensive, that the boasted improvement, in the present age, consists pretty much in banishing old to make way for new absurdities. While the good folks of England continue their faith in the magical operation of the sinking fund, the blessings of a national debt, or Mr. Owen's plan of placing the people out at board at the expense of the nation; and while our worthy countrymen follow in the footsteps of this faith, what business, I say again, have we to laugh at the magical wonders of St. Winifred's well? If Dr. Solomon could build a palace upon the credulity of mankind, in the nineteenth century, why should we laugh at the credulity which built only a little dome to the virtues of St. Winifred's well?

I shall say nothing about the ruins of Basingworth Abbey, which I passed in my way to the famous vale of *Clwydd*, which you may pronounce if you can. This vale extends almost all the way to *Llangollan*, which, on the whole, I think it excels in beauty. It is generally about three to four miles wide, and nearly thirty in length. Throughout almost the whole length of the vale, the two little rivers *Clwydd* and *Elwy* meander in curving parallels, sometimes appearing as if they would unite their waters, then capriciously separating wide apart, as if they had brawled themselves into a quarrel. Thus they coquette with each other

through the vale, exhibiting a thousand little meandering curves, and adding every beauty that can be added, to rich cultivated fields, pleasant villages, beautiful country-seats, and ruins associated with history, tradition, and fiction. The contrast of sterile hills and bald mountains on either side, with this scene of rural wealth, rural health, and rural innocence, is peculiarly striking. On a distant eminence, as I passed along, I observed the town of Ruthyn, once the seat of Grey of Ruthyn, the wily neighbour and antagonist of the "d——d magician Glendower," as Shakspeare calls him. It yet gives the title of Lord Grey of Ruthyn. The present representative, a lady, claims the right of bearing the king's spurs at the coronation! On another high mount I saw the castle, or rather the remains of the castle of Denbigh, a most striking object, whose ruined gateway seemed trembling on the verge of the steep. Shall I tell you, my dear brother, that most of these old castles, which form such prominent features in the picturesque tours, are, in reality, most insignificant objects. Now and then indeed I met with one, as Conway Castle for instance, which was really a noble ruin, but by far the greater portion of them are, in every respect, insignificant.

Leaving the vale of Clwydd, of whose sweet rural beauties I shall ever retain a pleasing recollection, I passed over a hilly rough ridge around the base of Penmanmoss, in doing which, I suddenly came upon a fine view of Conway Castle and town, finely backed by a range of mountains in the distance. The position of this castle and what remains of it, is really fine, and in some measure justifies the eulogies passed upon its picturesque beauties: it is as old as the thirteenth century, and was the work of Edward the First, who put rings in the Welshmen's noses by building strong castles. One

of the Earls of Conway transported the timber, lead, and iron, to Ireland, in the way of speculation, I believe ; since then it has gone to decay. It is usually rented at six shillings and eight pence paid to the king, and a dish of fish to the Marquis of Hertford. The town itself is a miserable place, abounding in beggars. Indeed, all the pleasure to be derived from a tour in these fine scenes, is in a great measure saddened by the wretched state of the people, and the fast increasing habit of begging. The pride of the Englishman, as well as of the Welshman, is gradually stooping to this degradation ; nor is it any longer a disgrace to beg. In every direction I was repelled from these recesses, which ought to be, and once were, the strong holds of virtuous independence, by the sight of human beings, whose spirits were bound down by poverty, and who, instead of hiding their wants, made them a pretence for asking charity of a stranger. At Conway is the worst ferry in the United Kingdom. I waited for the ferryman till I was quite tired, and finally altering my original intention, instead of crossing the river, continued on the side where I was for several miles. It turned out well, for I thus, by mere chance, fell into the track of some of the finest views I had yet seen.

The road wound along the terrace on the bank of the river, which gradually grew narrower, merely leaving room for strips of verdant meadows between its banks and the hills, which were fringed with wood at their base. On the other side appeared a ridge of high mountains, broken with masses of rocks, and sometimes half hid by the clouds flitting along its sides ; here and there brooks, rushing down the sides, or precipitating in fine little cascades, gave life and animation to this solitary scene. At the extremity of this vale is the town of Llanrwst, which must be pronounced with

a twist of the mouth : here I halted with a design of getting rest and refreshment. Llanrwst is hardly worth mentioning as a town ; but its situation is truly delightful, although here also the curse of inequality has showered its miseries. The principal proprietor of this part of Wales is Lord Gwydir, who is to figure in the coronation as chamberlain, in right of his wife, and will come in for a few towels, if not a wash-hand-basin. He has the character of an easy landlord, and rolls in wealth, while his tenants are, a great many of them, wallowing in poverty. You may think how they live in these stagnant times, when some of them pay as high as four guineas an acre, yearly rent, for meadow land. No wonder that even in this sequestered nook they think and talk of our New World, and, like the Israelites in the desert, look with longing eyes to the land of freedom, the land of individual independence, the land flowing with milk and honey. I cannot express the proud and secret transports of my heart, at hearing, as I have done in every part of England, in the crowded city, the cultivated fields, and sequestered mountains, poor people talking about our country, as a home to which they looked with longing eyes ; as a refuge, which if they could only once gain, they would no longer fear the ills of poverty, or the curse of dependance. In vain is it, that hired or disappointed travellers have indulged in every species of wanton and exaggerated misrepresentation ; in vain have they pictured our country, its character and its institutions, in the most uninviting colours ; in vain have our newspapers conjured up yellow fevers every summer ; in vain has the government tried to allure them to Canada, to the Cape of Good Hope, to Botany Bay. All that has been said of these ; all that has been said of the distresses under which our country is labouring ; all that

truth, falsehood, and declamation have uttered, has not diminished the poor man's confidence in the advantages held out to the English emigrant. They know, that for the price of one year's rent of an acre of English land, they could purchase to themselves the right and property for ever, in half a dozen acres, quite as good ; they know they will hold this land free from poor-rates, tithes, and taxation, except a mere trifle of the last ; and above all, they know, that the very miseries of which our mean, unmanly, and unprincipled speculators so loudly complain, would be happiness to them ; vast numbers would emigrate to America had the lower and labouring classes only the means of getting there : as it is, they talk of it as an event familiar to their wishes and imaginations, and feel that sort of anxiety to get thither, which those, who are born and brought up in a happy country, feel to return to it, after a long absence, like mine.

The English writers accuse us of assuming a lofty tone of boasting when we speak of our country ; and if we do, are we not justified ? Surely nothing can constitute a more excusable source of national pride than this heartfelt homage, paid by suffering humanity in all parts of Europe. Who would exchange this proud, this unexampled distinction of being the refuge and the hope of the oppressed and poverty-stricken in all parts of the world, that have ever heard of America, for pictures and statues, palaces, kings, and a trumpety coronation ? To reign over the hearts of suffering men, to be the goal of their hopes, the paradise of their waking visions, the fruition of all their wishes, is to be what no other country ever was, or ever deserved to be. In travelling through Europe you hardly ever hear a Frenchman, a German, or a Spaniard, talk of emigrating to any other country but America ; not even to England, which it was

once the fashion of their writers to hold up as the palladium of freedom : still less do you hear an Englishman, I mean a labouring Englishman, ever speak of seeking a refuge in any part of Europe. No ; if the affections of kindred, the sympathies of patriotism, the ligaments of early habits and youthful associations are to be severed, it is only our country that breaks them ; it is there only, that the attractive power of freedom and competence is strong enough to sever the ties of nature itself, and draw men from their native country for ever. If sensible of this pure, blameless, and unexampled distinction, we boast of it among those who affect to despise us, it is a privilege we have a right to make use of ; it is the legitimate offspring of an honest pride, founded in the love of a country which is worthy of our love.

I must not forget to mention, that mine host at Llanrwst was one of the most pompously indifferent, inattentive fellows in the world. He never knew any thing about his house, or what was in it, not he ; but he was somewhat excusable, being descended in a direct line from Llewellyn ap something, Prince of Wales ; in imitation of whom, he kept open house to all comers, and made them pay double.

LETTER X.

London.

DEAR BROTHER,

From Llanrwst, I made an excursion up the vale of Conway, to where the mountains approach so near each other, that there is just room for the river to pass. All the rest of the valley was completely shut in by the curving hills. This is the neighbourhood of Snowdon, which is never spoken of except in the extreme of high-wrought superlative. Its "astonishing height," 3, 600 feet—its abrupt sides and fantastic heads—its "horrible beauties"—and the "incredible velocity of its torrents," which, like most other mountain streams, are apt to run pretty fast down hill, and to tumble when they come to a perpendicular—all these, brother, are described by the picturesque travelers in such terms, that you would suppose every cascade a Niagara, and every hill, a Mont Blanc or a Peak of Teneriffe. The scenery, however, in spite of all their exaggerations, which of course must necessarily diminish the effect of the reality, is very striking. The misty mountain tops; the rugged and confused masses of rocks; the occasional torrents; and the rushing of the river through the pass, together with those ragged and savage features, which, almost every where, ac-

company the passage of rivers through mountains, all unite to form a scene of glorious variety.

Following a wild track, I came to the ruins of an ancient castle, called *Dolwyddellan*, which, mounted upon a high steep rock, formed a striking feature of this wild region. Below these ruins, and about a mile distant, is the little village of *Dolwyddellan*, situated in one of the most sequestered spots in the world. It consists of a few small cottages, inhabited by the simplest race, who speak no other language but the Welsh, and never, except when broken in upon by a picturesque tourist, see any new faces. They pride themselves, however, (for no people, however insignificant, can live without something to be proud of)—they pride themselves upon an old tradition, that *Llewellyn* was a native of their town. This I learned from my professor of languages, who, I beg you to understand, though I do not mention it, is always at my heels. I found him particularly useful here, as an interpreter, having begun to understand his English lately. I spent the night here among these rural innocents, in a thatched hut; and I do assure you, that never since I left America have I passed one more pleasantly. To the eye, the whole world was centred in this little valley. The breezy stillness of twilight, disturbed only by rural sounds, the most homely of which, such is the charm of association, sounded musically sweet, lulled me into a train of reflections, that centred at last in home. The calling of the cows; the voices of the women and children talking or singing; even the squeaking of the pigs, were all harmonious to the scene and the hour. The moon by and by rose, and hovering along the tops of the mountains, divided the little valley into spots of light and shade, beautifully contrasted, yet harmoniously blending with each other. All was peace, serenity, and confi-

dence. For the first time in England, among strangers, I was received without inquiry or suspicion, and nothing could exceed the simple reliance with which they placed their house, and all it afforded, at my command. True, they had nothing to lose worth taking; yet still it was a rare and pleasing trait of character, and as such I have remembered it, and shall do so as long as I live.

Their mode of living in this little village, and indeed throughout all this sequestered region, is such, as our beef, ham, and turkey-eating villains at home, would call starvation. They would not even put up with it in the poor-house or state prison. The cow and the goat furnish them with most of their food; and it is very seldom they get a meal of flesh among them. Yet they are far happier than most of the lower English peasantry, and a hundred times happier than a large portion of the labouring manufacturers. Their wants are few, and their habits are virtuous. Labour is there combined with health, wholesome though simple food, and pure elastic air. In a word, they are apparently happy in their situation, whatever estimate others may form of it, and that is quite enough for them. I met here but with one family, the one where I slept, who talked of going to America when they could get there. Through the medium of the professor, I told them of the old Welsh woman and her husband, who keep your dairy and garden; and when assured, that these ate as much fresh meat as they liked, morning, noon, and night, they cast up their eyes, and clapped their hands in utter astonishment. When I also made them comprehend, that this good couple had saved money enough, in a few years, to buy a hundred and fifty acres of land for themselves and their children, to have and to hold for ever, without lords, rents, tithes, or taxes, they almost shed tears, and for the

first time seemed sensible that something was wanting to their happiness. I almost reproached myself for what I had done. On going away, I gave the father your address; and as God shall prosper you, my brother, should they ever find their way to your door, I would have you recollect that they treated me kindly in the mountains of Wales.

From Dolwyddellan, I went, through a succession of interesting scenery, to the little village of Aber, which is a good place to halt at, for the purpose of ascending Penmanwaur. From this village, I explored a little glen, deep and romantic, which leads to a famous fall, called *Maes-y-Gair* or *Rhryadr Mawr*, I cannot say which, as my note is rather obscure. Here, to use the proper elevation of language, which all the tourists indulge, whenever they want to make a mountain of a molehill—here, the water, a small brook, rushing with indescribable velocity, foams and dashes over a tremendous slate rock, fifty feet high! I made a drawing of this, and some other great falls, with a scrupulous regard to the size and dimensions of objects, which I send with this letter. From these, which, I assure you, are rather heightened than otherwise, you will perceive, how we in America are misled by the high-sounding superlative of tourists, and the unjustifiable hyperbole of picturesque pencils. The *Rhryadr Mawr* is what we call a pretty little cascade at home. During a dry season, I am told, it is apt to disappear entirely. The winter is the best time for visiting them, only nobody can get there in that season.

Near the village of Aber, once stood a castle or palace of Llewellyn ap Gryffyd, Prince of Wales. Tradition has preserved the following tale connected with these ruins. At the siege of some place, Llewellyn took prisoner an English Baron, of the name of *William de Breos* or *de Bruce*, whom he

carried home, and treated with great hospitality, insomuch that a strong friendship grew up between them. Llewellyn's wife, Joan Plantagenet, daughter of king John, from pitying the captive knight, who was said to be very accomplished and beautiful, realized the affinity between compassion and love, and finally carried on a clandestine intercourse with De Breos. The English knight was afterwards set free, but before Llewellyn had discovered the wrong he had done him. When, however, it came to his knowledge not long afterwards, he invited De Breos to pay him a visit, threw him into a dungeon, and afterwards hanged him at a short distance from the castle upon a little knoll, full in sight. He then drew Joan to the window, and in the words of the legend—

"Lovely Princess," said Llewellyn,
 "What will you give to see your William?"
 "Wales and England and Llewellyn
 "I'd freely give to see my William."

Llewellyn, as might be expected, irritated at this answer, pointed out with horrible satisfaction the body of De Breos, hanging full in view. The lady did not expire at the sight, but lived several years afterwards with her husband, who, it seems, was satisfied with his revenge upon the lover. You must excuse me for troubling you with this stuff; but the fact is, there is little else to be told about these old castles, but tales of unprincipled love and outrageous revenge.

Nothing occurred worthy of record between Aber and Caernarvon, whither I next bent my way. This last is one of the finest towns in North Wales. It is surrounded by walls, which, together with the castle, were more entire than any I had observed in this country. The castle was built by Edward the First, and is admirably situ-

ated for "curbing the Welsh," as the phrase then was. In one of the small, dark rooms was born Edward the Second, in consequence of the queen being taken there to give the Welshmen a native Prince. He did them very little honour by his birth, for he was, beyond doubt, one of the most weak and worthless monarchs, that ever reigned in England. The views of, and from this castle, are highly picturesque and beautiful, and its preservation, for more than five hundred years, gives it a degree of sublimity approaching to the idea of perpetual duration.

Near to Caernarvon are the remains of the ancient Segontium, a Roman station; and parts of a Roman road are still to be traced in the vicinity. The road to Beddgelert passes through it. There are also the vestiges of a Roman fort, consisting of walls of great thickness, and perhaps ten feet high. Here I had the satisfaction of seeing, that the Romans built stone walls in Wales exactly as we do in America, and as they did in Italy, by laying one stone upon another. You see, brother, one learns something by travelling. It is said, however, that they used boiling mortar for cement, which is undoubtedly one great reason of the durability of their works. The mortar, being thus in a sort of liquid state, insinuated itself into every vacancy between the stones, and formed a solid wall. In the walls of this fort are a number of round holes, about three inches in diameter, and passing quite through. These holes have puzzled the antiquaries very much, and given occasion to various conjectures. If it might be permitted me to make a yankee guess, I would say, they were left there to look through, as occasion required, at the enemy or any thing else. From the eminences in the neighbourhood of Caernarvon, are seen the Isle of Anglesea, and a great variety of mountain peaks

ranged along for a considerable distance. The view of Anglesea was quite inviting, and almost tempted me to cross the ferry. Other considerations, however, prevented me, and I passed into what is called, by the picturesque tourists, the wonders of Snowdonia. The mention of this mountain reminds me of an omission in not telling you, that from Conway I ascended to the summit of *Penman-muir*, which rises fourteen hundred feet, almost perpendicular from the sea. It was the only place that at all realized the magnificent descriptions of the tourists, that I had yet seen in Wales. A walled road passes close around the edge of this tremendous ocean barrier; and the boundless prospect, as well as the sublime precipice, caused a glowing fluttering of the heart, partaking of elevation and apprehension combined. This place is all simplicity and sublimity. There are but three ingredients, all purely grand—the sky, the ocean, and the tremendous precipice. It is beyond doubt the noblest spot in all England, and makes an impression never to be forgotten.

I contented myself with viewing Snowdown from Beddgelert, from whence it makes rather a striking appearance, presenting a high peak, generally, however, encircled with vapours. Indeed, this is the region of humidity; and nine times in ten a traveller ascending the mountain gets wet in going up, and when he gains the summit, can see nothing but a Welsh mist, equal in obscurity to a genuine Welsh pedigree. I therefore turned my back on Snowdown, who very modestly retired behind his veil of vapours, and did not appear again the whole day. This region, which is called Snowdonia, is composed of subsidiary hills, lying about the base of Snowdown, and constituting properly the different steps in the ascent to that mountain, although there are valleys between. It is a wild

and dreary region, with scarcely a vestige of agriculture, and presenting nothing but the most harsh and savage features of nature. But I must caution you once more against the superlative phraseology of the tourists, when speaking of these places. They set out from London, where they have perhaps lived all their lives, without seeing a hill higher than Hampstead or Highgate, or any object of nature more sublime than the Thames and Rosamond's Pond, and coming into Wales, are fully assured that every thing they behold is on a scale of immensity, because it exceeds all they have ever seen before. When they come to a cascade of a brook three yards wide, falling down a rock thirty feet high, they cannot possibly make it brawl and roar loud enough, or work up the foam into sufficient vigour to astonish the reader. A precipice always threatens destruction, as loud as it can bawl, if it be only high enough to stand for a precipice; the rocks are all "gigantic;" the torrents are "vast," and rushing with most "savage impetuosity;" the "waters" are "tremendous," and the sheep and goats are always in imminent danger of breaking their necks. All this certainly makes a book read well, and gives the poor citizen, who never knows any thing of nature, except from books, a great advantage over an actual spectator of these scenes, because the latter sees only through his eyes, the former through his imagination. I assure you, brother, I have not half the opinion of Welsh scenery that I had, when reading tours and looking at pictures of Llangollan, &c. by your fire-side in America. The mountains of Switzerland present objects on a far greater scale; and nothing I have ever yet seen, in England or Wales, can rival the scenery of the Rhine and its neighbourhood for sublimity and beauty combined. All England can produce nothing to compare with the *Rhinegau*,

any more than all England can produce such wine.

Still you are not to understand me to mean, that the Welsh scenery is not very pretty, very respectable indeed, in point of variety at least. By one, who has never been out of England, it will undoubtedly be considered wonderful and unequalled. It is under this impression, that the tourists have deceived themselves and their readers, by adopting the superlative, when they should modestly have confined themselves to the positive, and not even ventured upon the comparative. Excepting the pass of *Penmanmuir*, the higher class of sublimity is nowhere to be seen in Wales. For my part, it was neither the mountains, the rivers, the cataracts, nor the magnitude, indeed, of any particular feature of nature that struck me. It was the beautiful, romantic, and solitary little vales, deeply embosomed in the mountains—the softer and more latent beauties, that caught my heart, and awakened the rural feeling in its highest state. Such scenery abounds in Wales, and to those who have a taste for it, few countries present more frequent or more entire gratification.

The view of the vale of Festiniog, on emerging from the defiles among the ruins and rugged tributaries of Snowdon, was of this character, and carried with it also the charm of novelty, as well as the sight of a comfortable looking little inn, to a weary and hungry traveller. This last is a prospect in which all true lovers of the picturesque delight.

LETTER XI.

London.

DEAR BROTHER,

The vale of Festiniog or Maentwrog is well cultivated, and abounds in rural beauties, the very seat of musing and tranquillity. It is all wild mountains without, and all gentleness within. The little village of Festiniog lies somewhat elevated above the surrounding fields, and at the foot of the mountains. Near it are the pretty falls of Cynfael, separated by a distance of about half a quarter of a mile, and the principal pitch about forty feet high. Below this, the water, being confined in a narrow pass of rocks, rushes along with considerable velocity, exhibiting altogether a picturesque and romantic spectacle. There is a singular rock rising out of the bed of the river like a column, and is called Hugh Lloyd's pulpit.

This little vale, which is only about three miles long and a mile wide, is intersected by a rivulet, called the river Dwyrid, on either side skirted with meadows, succeeded by cultivated fields along the sides of the hills, which, in many places, are covered with wood. At either end are high mountains, shutting out this little sequestered spot from all but the skies. The tide, at the bottom of the vale, flows in from the sea, which is just distinguished

through the opening, as you pass between the mountains. It is indeed a beautiful scene ; presenting on every side a combination of objects, associated with all that is gay, innocent, and happy, in the lot of man. Let those, who cannot make their spirits harmonize with nature in her rural paradise and rural pastimes, seek the luxurious enjoyments of the crowded city, eat, drink, and *not* be merry, and die. In the evening, I mean the twilight of the day, which in summer is so charming, that it seems a pity it is not longer, the Welsh songs were occasionally heard, and though but rude and simple, they were so much the better, for they harmonized with the simplicity of every thing around. The harp, too, is frequently heard in this vale, and in the repose of evening has a wondrous poetical effect, associated as it is with the bards and minstrelsy of the period of romance. Yet these rural people are not happy, as it would seem both God and nature intended they should be. High rents and heavy taxes will spoil even paradise, and bend the spirit of man down to the earth, be it ever so elastic. In a country labouring under these, it is not sufficient that the people have enough to supply their own little wants—they must have more—they must have something for the temporal, and something for the spiritual lord ; and above all, they must have something, a very great something, for their sovereign lord, the king, who puts his hand into every man's pot, and takes out the lion's share. It is indeed but little to the king, but it is every thing to the poor man, since it takes from him, not the superfluities, but the necessities of life. That must be but a bad sort of government, which is felt so heavily even in the recesses of the Welsh mountains. The neighbourhood of the sea puts them in mind of emigration, and they seldom hear the " wide weltering waves" without

thinking of our happy land beyond them. I must not omit to mention, that there is an inn here, called *Tan-y-Bwlch*, which is reprobated by all the picturesque travellers, and particularly those who journeyed on foot. Each of these has had a fling at the poor host, who, like Fielding's landlady, is not really an ill-natured person, but he loves money so well, that he hates every thing like poverty. There are two ways of quieting Englishmen, particularly English landlords. One by the jingling of money, the other by the jingling of bells. Either of these will calm the roarings of the stoutest John Bull. But among all the triumphs of gold, that of winning civility from an English innkeeper is certainly the greatest. It is conquering both nature and habit at a blow.

Passing the southern barrier of the valley, I took a farewell look at its beauties. The road now carried me for miles over mountains, which afforded views of great extent and variety, and comprehended the summit of Snowdon, which seems to have as many heads as Hydra; for one cannot look, it would seem, in any direction, without seeing Snowdon, or at least the clouds that hide his top. Passing a miserable village, inhabited by a miserable people, I gradually descended again into a valley abounding in wood, the road through which leads to the famous cascade of Dollymyllan, formed by a brook called the Gamlan, which foams and dashes terribly in the accounts of the tourists, but is really no more than the ordinary mountain torrents of our country present to every traveller, who has leisure and taste to admire them. If one could come upon them by surprise, it would be delightful. But there is nothing surprising left in Wales. The tourists have given such exaggerated impressions of every thing, that disappointment is the prevailing feeling, and none,

but a true and ardent lover of nature, can endure the depression of his high-raised expectations.

After visiting two other little cascades, the Cayne and Mothwaye, which are really worth going a couple of miles to see, and passing through a tract abounding in striking features, I gradually descended, along the rocky and almost sublime shelving bank of the Mawdoch, to Dolgelly, the poor capital of Merionethshire. There was very little here to eat, but a great deal to see; poverty, the bane of happiness, is here—I mean beggarly poverty—want. The town lies at the base of *Cader Idris*, which rises almost perpendicularly, presenting a broken rocky face, of uncommon grimness and savage majesty. It is only about twenty-eight hundred feet high; but its abruptness, and, above all, its detached position, distinct from any other range, gives it an air of great majesty. Indeed, it may be remarked, that the Welsh scenery, particularly mountains, derives most of its effect from its abrupt transitions, and the frequent occurrence of hills and rocks that are nearly perpendicular. A precipice, or very steep mountain, approaches more near to the sublime, than a mass of rocks, or a full-swelling hill of thrice their altitude. Another feature, which undoubtedly contributes to render the Welsh mountains more striking, though far less beautiful, is their general barrenness. Destitute almost entirely of trees, they present a grim and terrible aspect; and I was perpetually struck with the contrast between them and our native hills, the fine foliage of whose trees, extending quite to the summit, gives them a fleecy softness, a feathery outline peculiar to themselves. Nothing indeed can be more enchantingly beautiful, than a view of the gray rocks, and variegated foliage of one of

our mountains through the pure transparent atmosphere of an early October morning.

The fiend, who presides over the picturesque in these regions, tempted me to the ascent of *Cader Idris*. Accordingly, invited by a fine morning of most promising aspect, I proceeded to the house of an honest, but exceedingly poor publican, situated just at the point for beginning this mighty task. I chose the path gullied out by a little torrent, which, during rains, leaps from rock to rock, through a deep winding way, from the summit to the vale below, stopping, as it were, to rest after each leap, in little transparent crystal basins, formed by its perpetual action. *Hic labor, hoc opus est*, quoth I, as I toiled and climbed upwards, the ascent growing more and more difficult as I approached the summit. Nevertheless, the anticipated prospect supported my strength and renovated my spirits. But the picturesque d——l, or, more politely, fiend, brownie, or goblin, played me a trick after all; for, just about the time I was toiling in the ravine, the vapours were gathering at the top, and a shower of rain hailed my emerging to the light of day. I got a wet jacket, and missed a prospect of two hundred miles in circuit. This comes of breaking one's resolution. Before I set foot in Wales, I had covenanted with myself, that I would never go out of my way for a mountain, except to avoid it. If the mountain came to Mahomet—good—but Mahomet was never to go to the mountain. Cader Idris tempted me, however, and I fell into a great shower, which not only spoiled my picturesque hunting coat, but hid all the prospect in dense mists. When I came down, I took out my book to see, what I might have seen if it had pleased heaven, and was consoled to find that several tourists, besides myself, had got a wet skin in ascending the mountain,

and had, like me, come down as wise as they went up.

I shook the mud from my feet, as did the trees of Orpheus from their roots, when that divine fiddler set them dancing, and turning my back to this uncourtly, inhospitable mountain, proceeded to the junction of the Mawdoch with the Avon. The ride from Dolgelly, along one of the most extraordinary roads in Wales for art and labour, is singularly fine, presenting a bold and variegated scenery, particularly on the north. After the junction of the two rivers, the expanse of water becomes very broad, at full tide especially, when it appears like a broad lake encompassed with high and irregular mountains. At low water it looks, if the truth must be told, very like a great marsh, with a creek meandering through the mud thereof. At the outlet of this lake is Barmouth, which is frequented by the Welsh gentry for the purpose of sea-bathing. Barmouth is called the Gibraltar of Wales. It is placed on a high rock, 'tis true, but it is not Gibraltar. The town is mean, incommodious, and difficult of access, presenting, on the whole, nearly all the inconveniences which form the principal attraction of watering places.

Returning to Dolgelly, I followed the course of the Avon—not Shakspeare's Avon—through a well-cultivated region, enclosed by high hills, dividing the basins of those streams that water the two divisions of Merionethshire. This brought me at length to the great Bala, Lyn-Tegid, or Pimble-Mere, the largest lake in North Wales. It has little remarkable about it, and the greatest wonder is, that being so small, it should be the greatest in all this country. It is estimated at from four to six miles long, and one mile broad. I forgot, however—there is a wonder about this

lake. The river Dee, which rises near the head of the lake, is affirmed, by Giraldus Cambrensis, to pass quite from one end to the other, through this "immense" body of water, as it is called, without mingling its waters with those of Bala. It is quite amusing to read the accounts of terrible dangers, of inundations, and the like, which have frequently befallen the unfortunate people there, from the immense swells, occasioned by the storms, upon this immense body of water of one mile wide! I had heard of a puddle in a storm before I came to Wales. I made an excursion round the lake, but saw nothing remarkable, except the vestiges of an overflow of the river, of which my guide gave me a terrible account, concluding with the catastrophe of ten cows that were carried away. This was enough to impoverish half Wales, where a cow is often the common property of a whole town!

Leaving the little town of Bala, I reached the river Dee, and came to the little town of Corwen, remarkable for a most ferocious and gigantic likeness of the great Owen Glendower, who is the hero of every impossible feat, or miraculous appearance in this his chosen retreat. I hope, for the credit of Owen, the likeness is not a good one. There is the impression of a dagger in a stone, which he made by throwing it away in a passion. This forms part of a door-way, made on purpose for him, when he one day took it into his head, it seems, to go to church, a rare event commemorated by this door. Nobody must doubt these stories, for all Wales would rise to resent it, and the very echoes turn into growls of disapprobation. From Corwen, I again passed along the banks of the Dee, by a charming road to Llangollan, having thus return-

ed to the spot, from whence I commenced my tour. There is another portion of North Wales which I did not visit, as what I had already seen was universally considered the most beautiful, picturesque, and romantic. In fact, I began to be tired of travelling alone, and felt the want of that which nothing can supply, a mind to commune with, and a heart to make responses to mine. Before I finally bid farewell to North Wales, I will give you my impressions with regard to the character of the people, and their political situation.

The peculiar characteristics, by which the Welsh were formerly distinguished, are fast wearing away. Subjugation to English rulers, and submission to English taxes, have altered their very nature, and little of the high-spirited independence of the followers of Llewellyn now remains. Excessive poverty, when it begets an abject dependence upon public or private munificence, grinds away all prominent points of character, and almost uniformly produces a sycophant. I do not say, this is true of all the middle and lower orders in Wales; but there is enough of this to give a different aspect to the national character. It is mixed up in such large proportions, as to give a tone to the whole mass. Comparative poverty, when man has but little, and wants no more, is an honest fellow enough; but rely upon it, brother, that abject want is a great scoundrel nine times out of ten. He is assailed by too many inevitable temptations to be honest long. Hunger will break through stone walls; can we then wonder that it breaks the commandments?

Whoever travels among the Welsh people, and, above all, whoever attends the assizes, will be satisfied they are not what they were fifty, ay, fifteen years ago. Not half a century is passed since the sheriff of Flintshire (I think it was) was obliged to send to Liver-

pool for a man to execute a criminal; the cart, too, on which the criminal went to the gallows, was hired at a price, for which it might have been procured for other labours a whole month. Two such facts are decisive of a pure and healthy state of morals; they prove the horror of the people, at both the crime and the punishment; a horror, which could only arise from the infrequency of both.—Now, however, the case is somewhat different; the want, or the love of money, renders the procuring of executioners and carts comparatively easy. Crimes and punishments have multiplied considerably, especially in the manufacturing towns and districts, and even the innocent are becoming more and more familiarized to depravity and punishment.

For all this, however, the Welsh are comparatively a virtuous and honest race. A proof of this is the very honourable fact, that it is not uncommon for the assizes to be held in the towns in the interior, where they are somewhat out of the reach of English example, without a single criminal case being tried. When we contrast this with the county assizes in England, it cannot be denied that the people of Wales shine by the side of their neighbours. Although somewhat corrupted by long intercourse with England, and impoverished by her system of taxation, they are still a high-spirited people, and possess considerable traces of ancient peculiarities. They still love the harp, and cherish the strains of their bards to the achievements of their heroes. There is hardly a family, or at least before the withering blight of poverty fell upon them, there *was* hardly a family without its harper among the sons or grandsons. This national instrument, tuned, as it always was, to national airs and national themes, contributed beyond all other causes, to preserve a national feeling and

character among them. Music and poetry make men love their country, perhaps even more than substantial benefits. The lower or middling classes are also generally frank, and untainted either by cant or hypocrisy, the vices of this age and country. They are also tinctured with as much of the ancient British hospitality as their poverty will permit: they will invite you into their hovels without suspicion; but too often they cannot ask you to eat, having nothing to spare from their own absolute wants.

Yet there is plenty of every thing, and every thing is cheap among them. How is it then that this paradox of human misery exists in the midst of plenty? The land they till is not their own, my brother. They have the same rent to pay when their produce is cheap, as when it is dear, and consequently the plenty of a surplus produce, for which there is no demand, impoverishes them. Had they no rents nor taxes to pay, this profusion would be a blessing; now it operates in the other extreme, and is actually a misfortune. Lord Liverpool, the premier, not long since acknowledged the truth of this strange doctrine, when he ascribed a great portion of the miseries of this country to the abundant harvests, bestowed by the bounty of Providence. Thus it is, that this boasted system of British wisdom has produced the paradox of want in the midst of profusion. By its incessant cobbling and tinkering, and undertaking to divert the course of nature, as well as the eternal economy of Providence, this government has wrested the blessings of heaven from their usual and ordinary effects, converting benign seasons and plenteous harvests, and all the bounties of an indulgent Benefactor, into curses and maledictions. It cannot be that this is wisdom, that so mars and murders the mercies of God, and

distorts the very redundancies of the harvest into famine and misery.

The natural disposition to hospitality in the Welsh is thus checked in its operation by penury. This fine and delightful characteristic, which, like charity, hides a multitude of sins, is there narrowed into a love of kindred, and a warm disposition of heart to welcome them to house and home on every occasion where their means will admit. I have seldom seen a people that cherished to such an extent the ties of relationship and blood. They value their own blood so high, that whoever has a drop of it in his veins, is held in kind remembrance by that single drop. This feeling is also connected with some old reliques of ancient times. Their landlord, especially if he have any of the blood of the *Aps* about him, is held in estimation accordingly; and, though they feel the hardships of inferiority, they seem proud of his superiority. The tenantry often reminded me of our negroes, who, you know, take rank, and assume a consequence in proportion to the dignity of their masters. But this peculiarity is fast wearing away, and the best, in fact the only tolerable tie between landlord and tenant, master and slave, is now almost severed. The landlord resides far away, and seldom condescends to minister to their comforts, by spending his income among them, or delight their little vanities by his notice and approbation. He is principally known by his exactions of rent through an inflexible bailiff, who only, for the most part, represents him in his character of oppressor. They begin to hate the lords they formerly loved and feared; and when the many cherish this feeling towards the few, one of two things must happen, additional curbs, or total emancipation.

The Welsh are an exceedingly lively and animated people, somewhat hot and testy withal.—

These are delightful characteristics to mould by a lenient and indulgent, yet firm and temperate government. While a people are happy, these qualities conduce to the welfare and splendour of a state ; but wo to a government, if it tread too hard upon a worm of this kidney ! it will turn in time, and in turning, very likely overturn all above it. In short, the Welshman is somewhat of the temperature of his ancestors the Gauls ; and should his blood be too much heated by oppressive landlords and inflexible taxgatherers, the mountains will ring with something besides the harp strings. At present, however, I think there is little danger of any risings in Wales. As long as they have the honour to give a title to the English heir, they will probably consider that an equivalent for any little twinges of hunger, or stings of dependence, which the profusion and arrogance of England entails upon them. You cannot conceive, my dear brother, what stress is laid upon such fripperies, such paltry distinctions in this country. I sometimes think they must change their very nature, and be born again, before they can realize, or even comprehend, the simplest elements of freedom. They sometimes talk about liberty ; but it is the parrot repeating without ideas, or the idiot attempting to analyze the powers of genius. From the first moment they open their eyes in the cradle, to that when they close them in death, they see nothing, they feel nothing, they comprehend nothing but their own inferiority to those privileged beings, for whom they toil and spin. So little, indeed, are the British travellers accustomed to see any thing like a manly frankness and independence in the lower orders at home, that when they visit our country, they actually mistake that primitive energy of character, which is the genuine offspring of freedom, for rudeness and barbarity. Such is the incurable

habit of cowering to their lords, and through a thousand gradations upwards to their king, inherited and added to, from generation to generation, that nothing but hunger makes them dream even of expostulation or opposition. . Their resistance is the snarling and growling of a cur, when his bone is taken away ; not the resistance of reason and feeling, indignant at the insult, and repelling that rather than the injury. I do not mean to reproach them for this. How should they feel otherwise, or know any better ? I pity these people, but far be it from me to despise them. They are not educated for freemen, how then can they be free, unless through a long series of slow and painful progress, during which, each generation will become more and more fitted to be free, as through a long series of progressive degradation they become fitted for slaves.

Of the land-proprietors, and higher orders in Wales, and their once renowned hospitality, I can say but little. You can get a dinner and night's lodging of them sometimes, provided you bring a letter from a great man they wish to oblige ; but it is not given to you—it is given to the great man. But that noble feeling of hospitality, which springs from a liberal heart and open hand ; which is bestowed, not from vanity, ostentation, or interest, but from love to our fellow-creatures ; that hospitality, which you and I, and every other reputable traveller, have shared liberally in our own country, is not to be found among the gentry of Wales or England. How it may be in Scotland or Ireland I cannot say ; but if I live, I mean to speak from experience on that head. Rely upon it, my dear brother, if we take the boasts, which perhaps were well founded a century ago, as our present criterion for English hospitality, or any thing else in England, we shall be as much disappointed on trial

as was the innamorato, who fell in love with the picture of a young and beautiful lady, and afterwards saw the original in the person of a superannuated old woman.

LETTER XII.

London.

DEAR BROTHER,

BIDDING adieu to North Wales, I again found myself at Shrewsbury, where, resuming my horses, I returned by a roundabout way through Staffordshire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicester, Northampton, &c. to London. My object in this devious route was, to enlarge my sphere of observation, with a view of forming more correct conclusions with respect to the real condition of the people; the state of agriculture, morals, and religion, so as to test the excellence of this system of government and its administration by its effects. At different intervals of leisure, I shall communicate to you the result of my observations; commencing with the situation of the agriculturists, always the most important interest in every country, and every where affording, by their relative prosperity or depression, the best criterion of the measures of the government, so far as these can affect individual prosperity.

Beyond all doubt, my dear brother, some of the farmers in the midland counties have brought agri-

culture to as high perfection as it was ever before carried. The vast labour and expense, applied to small farms and parcels of land, and that too with much judgment, generally resulted in the production of the greatest crops. While these crops met with a ready sale, and at a price affording a profit, this vast application of labour and expense brought with it a return of profit, and enriched the farmer. But it is quite natural, that when the produce no longer repays the expenditure of labour, food, tithes, and taxes, there should be no longer any spur to enterprise or exertion. The improvement of the land, the labours of cultivation, and all the refinements of agriculture, which the common farmers practised with profit, because every additional bushel of wheat brought more or less of a clear gain—all these will be abandoned by degrees, when the fruits no longer repay the toil and expense.

My practice has been to make a short stay at the villages I passed through; to wander about, and look at the people in the fields, who, by dint of seeing me three or four times, would get over their strangeness, and often converse with me freely on their affairs. It is by frequently resorting to this practice, that I gained a knowledge of the depression of agriculture and its causes. No one knows where the shoe pinches, or the cause of its pinching, so well as he that wears it; the sufferer can best tell the sources of his grief. The noble trio that have produced the ruin of the tenantry of England, are rents, tithes, and taxes.

While a brisk market, a ready sale, prompt payment, and high prices offered themselves, the tenant did not so much mind the rent he paid, or the taxes levied upon him, both which have been gradually increasing with the creation and magnitude of paper credits, paper currency, and

national expenditures. But suddenly his market is glutted, prices fall, and rents and taxes continue the same, or become higher than they were. His situation may easily be conceived without the magic spectacles of political economy ; he is impoverished and ruined. The very perfection to which he brought his system of farming adds to his misfortunes, because it will not now repay him the interest of the labour and expense laid out upon it. But let me consider the three heads separately, in order to give you a clearer idea of the subject.

Formerly, in the good old steady times, before the invention of paper-money introduced those ruinous and sudden fluctuations in the value of the circulating medium, which destroy all the stability of property, and long before the science of political economy enabled ministers to mortgage land, houses, labour, men, women, and children to the latest posterity, the leases of land in England were generally for a considerable number of years : fourteen, twenty-one, and so on to ninety-nine years, were the usual periods. But as these leases fell in, and the value of money gradually decreased in consequence of the causes before stated, and continued decreasing, the landholders became cautious of giving long leases, which would put it out of their power to proportion the rents to the fluctuations of money. It is now, therefore, very much the custom, to grant either very short leases, or to let out farms by the year, than which nothing can be more injurious to the proprietor and the tenant, since it is obvious, that the latter can feel no permanent interest connected with the land he occupies, and will of course take little care, except to make it as profitable as possible for the time being. To prevent his impoverishing the land, however, it is customary to prescribe the mode of cultivation. Thus, in Buckinghamshire,

and elsewhere, the tenant is confined to two or three crops and a fallow, and is not allowed to grow clover or green food. It will easily be perceived, that by this arrangement the interests of the landlord and tenant, instead of being united as they ought to be, are entirely at variance, and consequently neither prospers.

Throughout almost all England where I have been, the rents are no longer paid in kind, the only just and equitable mode towards a tenantry, since, while it preserves the interests of the landlord, it prevents the tenant from falling a victim to a state, which, if left to its natural course, would be a state of prosperity—I mean, when the necessities of life are abundant and cheap. Rents are now paid in money, and consequently the very plenty and cheapness of the farmer's products are his greatest misfortune. In some of the counties these rents amount to from seven to twenty-eight shillings sterling; in others, from sixteen to thirty; and in parts of the county of Middlesex, from twelve shillings to twelve, nay, even twenty pounds sterling per acre.

The tithes are, as you know, a tenth of the produce of the land, and are exclusively deducted from the tenant's gains. He cannot eat an egg, pluck an apple, or kill a chicken from his flock, without the parson having first received his tenths. To prevent this eternal and vexatious restraint and inquisition, it is common to commute the tithes into a certain yearly sum. In some places this tribute is one-fourth of the amount of the rent paid by the tenant to the landlord; in others it is more; in some less. Thus, this will bring the rent of some of the land up from fifteen to twenty-five pounds per acre, in some of the counties in the vicinity of London.

The next item is taxes—taxes—taxes—from morn till night, from the cradle to the grave. In one shape or another, either to the king or to the beggar, and it is a question which is the greater pauper in reality, they continually beset the unfortunate tenant. In vain has it been urged, that these all come eventually out of the pocket of the landlord. I say they do not: they come from the sweat of the peasant's brow, the labour of his hands, the privation of his comforts—they are the aggregate of all he can spare, and more than he can spare, from those comforts that are necessary to keep his body and soul together. In England, the landholder and the fundholder make the laws, lay the taxes, and rent the lands. Is it not certain—does not all experience, all example, all nature, demonstrate, that the burthen will be laid upon those who have no voice in the state, except to complain in secret, and whose resistance is rebellion and death? Every man that looks closely at England, will distinctly perceive, that both tithes and taxes are paid by the tenant, and not by the landlord. Poverty always puts the poor man in the power of the rich.

It is impossible to give you a distinct idea of the weight of taxation and poor rates, both daily increasing with the increase of the public debt, and the decrease of the numbers who have paid until they can pay no longer, and now pass over from the givers to the receivers. In some places whole parishes have become paupers, and the entire rents consumed in their maintenance. In others, the burthen has become so intolerable to the few remaining persons who do not receive any thing from the poor rates, that they will soon become paupers themselves. I will, however, give you a very moderate example in one of the smaller parishes in a shire of the interior, where the peo-

ple were considered as indifferently well off, from which to form some estimate. The parish contained eight hundred and forty acres, of which about one-eighth was barren. This land was inhabited by one hundred and sixty-six persons, who paid no less a sum than nine hundred and ten pounds sterling in taxes, and tithes, and poor rates. About one-fourth of this sum was for tithes. I repeat again, my dear brother, that this is by no means any thing like an extreme case ; it is hardly a medium.

Since the repeal of the income tax, the tenantry in this country have paid at least five-sixths of the taxes, either directly, or indirectly as consumers. They pay the expenditures of government, and the interest on the public debt, which amounts to more than seven hundred and fifty millions sterling—a mere trifle ! This debt is principally held by Englishmen, *and so much the worse*. Nearly eight hundred millions of property, belonging to Englishmen, is thus placed out of the reach of taxation, and, at the same time, the tenantry obliged to pay the interest on this enormous sum. This engine works both ways : it withdraws one man's property from the reach of the tax-gatherer, and places it out, where the interest is to be paid by the labours and property of another. Is it any wonder that the tenantry are ground to the earth, the land sweated to the soul, and the landholders ready to buy into the funds at all hazards ? So long as there is any land left to sell or mortgage in England, so long will the holders be ready to invest it in the funds, where it pays no taxes, and taxes others to pay interest. This is the secret of the public credit here. A man will rather trust to the fate of a bubble, than leave his property in the certain road to the tax-gatherer's pocket.

Under all these circumstances, you cannot wonder if the agricultural interest is in a state of great depression ; that the people have no heart to labour, since neither industry nor economy can keep them from want. That must be a wretched country, where the two great virtues of the labouring class, industry and economy, cannot keep the wolf from the door. Such is the case with England. The tenantry find the produce of their fields decreasing in value, while their rents remain the same, and the taxes and poor rates are increasing. The consequence is, abject poverty among a large portion, and approaching poverty among the remainder.

I have never been among a people I pitied so much as this industrious, patriotic, abused, and deceived tenantry. No body of people on the face of the earth, or that ever were upon the face of the earth, have made such sacrifices for their country. They have patiently endured for years a system of taxation without example, and have freely given to their country all that they could spare, and more besides. They have worked, and watched, and starved for their country, and contributed to what they believed to be her safety or her glory, almost as many millions as they have given to their own comforts. They looked to the banishment of Napoleon and the re-establishment of peace, as the end of their sacrifices, and they found it but the beginning of their sufferings. They discovered, too late, that they had sacrificed their substance for a shadow, and riveted their own chains while they believed themselves breaking those of Europe. Yet they are neither turbulent nor disaffected to the extent which their sufferings would justify. They look to parliamentary reform, and the consequent reduction of taxes, as the means of relieving their distresses, and remain

quiet in the hope of future impossibilities. They deserve a better fate; for, though in some degree debased by want and its natural result, dependence, they have still the elements of an honest, hardy, enduring, and worthy people. Could they by any possibility be relieved from their burthens, and rise to a state of comparative competency, they would be, what they once were, worthy of being the ancestors of our countrymen. But such is not even to be hoped, without a revolution. The government cannot, if it would, diminish the taxes, and would not, if it could. The landlords make subscriptions and form societies for giving them charity; but they do not diminish their rents to any great extent, nor do the clergy relinquish a tittle of their tithes, either for the love of man or the love of heaven.

In comparing the situation of the manufacturing with that of the agricultural labourers, I found the balance against the former in every point of view. There is more misery, as well as vice and ignorance, among them. Their wages are actually and literally entirely insufficient to satisfy the wants of nature, where a man has a family to support. In many of the manufactories of Birmingham and Manchester, they labour only half the time, three days in the week, because there is not work for them, and this at one-third, and sometimes one-half less wages, than they received during the war. No one, that has not seen, can conceive the squalid and miserable looks of these people, between the dirt and unwholsomeness of their employment, the ignorant worthlessness of their characters, and the shifts the poor creatures are obliged to resort to in order to exist. It is not to be wondered at, if, in the madness of misery, and cast out as it were from a participation in the common benefits of society, they become turbulent, seditious, and danger-

ous. It is because they are hungry, and their children are starving, and not because they have read Thomas Paine or William Cobbett, that they are become radicals, as is the phrase of the day. Give them plenty to eat, and they will lie down as contentedly as a pig in the sty. Probably more than two-thirds of them cannot read; what absurdity then to suppose, or what hypocrisy rather to pretend to suppose, they are excited to acts of violence by books!

No books, however eloquent or insidious, can, I imagine, set this nation in opposition to its government on a mere abstract principle. The common people must be excited by something beyond this. They must be either religious fanatics, or they must be ill governed, and feel themselves so, before they will rush into actual violence against their rulers. In my own opinion, and I think experience and example will support me, when a general disaffection reigns among a people, it can be produced only by oppression. Not all the arts of turbulent demagogues, nor the intrigues of disappointed ambition, can make a whole community believe they suffer what they do not suffer, or instil into them a spirit of disaffection towards a government, under which they live in the free exercise of their rights, and the reasonable enjoyment of their usual and ordinary comforts. Partial and immaterial tumults may occasionally be created by the instigation of designing persons, but they will be such as the civil power is capable of suppressing, with the aid of the well affected people. There will be no necessity for quartering soldiers in the neighbourhood of towns, to trample upon the people at the command of a military officer, instead of a civil magistrate. And let me tell you, brother, although the advocates of military despotism pretend to the contrary here, there is a vast

difference between a magistrate being assisted by the *posse comitatus* in the execution of his office, and by a body of regular troops.

In the first case, the people execute the laws ; and the people, notwithstanding their obligation to assist the magistrate at his call, will never, it is to be presumed, uphold him in oppressing the people. If they refuse to execute the command of the magistrate, they know they must be tried for the offence by the people, by the country, which will never condemn them for refusing to become instruments in oppressing their neighbours. But the army is a body distinct from the people, governed by its own peculiar laws, and subject to its own officers. When a party of soldiers, therefore, is called out to the assistance of a magistrate, they are not bidden as subjects, but soldiers ; and, having neither habits nor interests in common with the people, are just as likely to oppress them as not. Nay, if their officer command them, they must do so, for the disobedience of orders is mutiny, and mutiny is death, not by the verdict of a jury of the people, but by sentence of a court martial, having nothing in common with the people. For this reason, soldiers always have been, and, I fear, always will be, instruments in the hand of power to oppress the citizen. It may therefore safely be concluded, I think, that when they become the ordinary instruments for enforcing obedience to the laws, the people are under the worst species of oppression, a military despotism. This is at present the situation of many parts of England, Ireland, and Scotland, especially in the manufacturing districts, where the sufferings of the people, with their numbers and proximity, have produced a state of fermentation, which the civil authority is too weak to control. It was made an argument for keeping up the present army, that the numbers

of the manufacturers were so great, that they required a standing force of two or three score thousand men to quell their miseries. I say miseries, for to return to this subject, I am fully satisfied, that every insurrection in this country, from the days of *Watt Tyler* to the present time, may be clearly deduced from certain abuses and excesses of the government or its officers.

Many persons take up their ideas of English history from Shakspeare, who, however, is not the best authority for historical facts. The dramatist has represented *Watt* and his companions as warring against learning; butchering men for being able to read and write; and, in fact, acting upon the most absurd principles of irrational equality. But, what says history? We are expressly told that the insurrection, headed by *Watt Tyler*, was the immediate consequence of a poll-tax, which was not only burthensome in itself, but still more grievous from the great powers given to the collectors, and the oppressive manner in which they were exercised. This was the principal cause of complaint, though there were others, which had their agency in producing the tumults. The people complained of the want of protection from foreign enemies, who were permitted to ravage the coasts of England with impunity; while their domestic foes, the lawyers, ruined them with vexatious suits and extorted fees. They were also, in addition to the abuses practised by the collectors of taxes, exposed to the oppressions of the nobility, and lords of the manors, who, by their mal-administration of the law in their baronial courts, kept them in a state of slavery.

From these causes proceeded the rising of the commons under *Watt Tyler*. The insurrection was quelled, it is true, and the leaders suffered death: yet the causes existed, and of consequence

other tumults succeeded, which were as usual suppressed, not by removing the cause, but by punishing the leaders. All would not do, however; the discontents of the commons continued, and, as is usual in these long-growing and maturing disorders of the state, at length resulted in a great army, headed by the Duke of Gloucester, who defeated the king, and beheaded or hanged his ministers. One of the most obnoxious of these was Sir Robert Tresilian, who was tried and condemned in parliament for high treason, and hanged at Tyburn. This for a while quieted the people: but this infatuated king, returning to his usual courses, and despising the just complaints of his subjects, lived a life of tumult and vexation, and finally paved the way for the succession of a rival house. If the subsequent insurrections and civil wars be traced to their sources, they will all, without exception, be found to originate either in civil, military, or religious oppressions. No prosperous and happy people will wantonly fly in the face of a good government; nor can any community, except from accidental causes beyond the control of human power, be extensively miserable, but through the follies or the crimes of its rulers.

It is not for us, therefore, to brand the people of this country, as their rulers have done, with disaffection, impiety, moral and political wickedness, and all the horrible ingredients that go to the formation of a British populace, as described by the loyal writers of the day. I will allow, that the labouring manufacturing class is ignorant, and vicious in a considerable degree. They are so confined to one spot and one occupation, which is altogether mechanical, that they can hardly be said to belong to the world, or to be members of the body politic. They are parts of the machinery of the manufactories, and every body knows, that when machinery gets out of order

it makes sad work. Now the human machines of Birmingham, Manchester, &c. are terribly out of order : they want wherewithal to eat. They have little work and less wages, and they are literally pining for want of wholesome food. Meat they never taste, and bread and beer are almost luxuries. Can we wonder, my dear brother—can we blame these wretched beings, who see nobles around the country, fundholders and stock-jobbers, and pensioners and placemen, rolling in that wealth, of which a little, a hundredth or a thousandth part would, enable them to feed and clothe their families—can we wonder, if seeing all this, and suffering as they do suffer, they should dissolve partnership with a society, which puts all the labour upon them, and pockets all the gains? Government, as is proudly and for the first time distinctly asserted in our immortal Declaration—government was instituted for the happiness of the people alone. If a large, and the larger proportion of these be cheated by the wiles of political economists, and juggling statesmen, of that portion of public happiness and prosperity, to which the rights of nature and the institutions of man give them a title, they have authority from the Author of nature to demand the restoration of these blessings, and to enforce their demand, “peaceably if they can; forcibly if they must.” Is it better that a small portion of people in a great nation should possess enormous superfluities, or that a great majority of them should possess a competency, should be beyond the reach of want? If it be not better for the few to be rich, and the many to be beggars, then let us ask, whether a government, which entails this state of things upon its subjects, is, in a moral, religious, or political point of view, an object entitled to the least degree of veneration for its antiquity or its theoretical excellence? These are questions which must

be looked in the face and answered, before the present century shall have gone round. It is useless to temporize. There is a time when a government may be mended; there is also a time when, as the boy said in reply to Pope's exclamation of "God mend me," "I had rather make half a dozen new ones," than undertake to cobble at one of these old, rickety, corrupt, and bed-ridden constitutions, the miserable pageants of which can only be supported by a priest on one side and an assassin-soldier on the other. In vain do such governments and such rulers arrogate a divine, religious right to trample upon the human race. There is not a single feature of analogy to maintain this assumption. Religion is in its purity the most democratic of all things; it teaches that all men are equal in the sight of the great Governor of the universe, kings and cobblers, emperors and empirics, princes and pedlers. This is the first principle in the government of a supreme being; and we are taught, that the object of divine providence is to make all happy, without distinction of rank or fortune. The only attribute that gives one being a superiority over another in the eyes of his Maker, is superior virtue. If then kings be the vicegerents of God upon earth, if they really derive their power and exercise their authority by express delegation from the Most High, let them convince us of the truth of their mission, let them imitate him whom they blasphemously dare to represent, and so govern as to make their people happy and prosperous.

Just as I had finished this part of my letter, I happened to see an advertisement of the publication of the Report of the Committee of Parliament, appointed to investigate the causes of the depression of agriculture in this country. You must have observed that every year this farce of committees is played to the nation, which, it would seem, only

requires a reasonably clear insight into the causes of an evil to be quite satisfied, without any attempt at a cure. This insight into the nature of their disease enables them to bear it with tolerable patience, till parliament meets again, when another consultation of political doctors is held, which results in some more unintelligible jargon of political economy, which answers the same purpose as before.

For your amusement, or, if you please, for your edification, I will give you a short summary of the reasoning with which this report is occupied, and the conclusions drawn by the committee. They first admit in its fullest extent the truth of the complaints set forth by the petitions before them, and "that the tenant is now, owing to the low price of grain, under the necessity of paying from his capital a considerable portion of his outgoings." This is the language of political economists; the plain English is, that the profits of his farm will not pay his rent. Still the committee affirm, that "rents have as yet been paid without much arrear, except in particular districts; a punctuality, which seems to afford ground for hoping that the tenantry possess resources, which will enable them to surmount their difficulties, especially as landlords have been induced to lower their rents in many instances, not only on new leases, but on subsisting contracts." This is a very insidious passage. To my certain knowledge, these "particular districts" are to be found all over the country, in which there is not a single parish, where the payment of these rents has not produced eventual pauperism in some of the tenants. Those, who have been enabled to pay without utter ruin, have done it at the sacrifice of their former gains, or the relinquishment of their common and ordinary comforts. I admit, that the absolute ruin of the tenantry is not gene-

ral, "except in particular districts," to use the expression of the committee; but it is a melancholy fact, over which the philanthropy of Mr. Wilberforce might weep for hours, were it not exclusively monopolized by a different colour and different quarter of the globe—it is a melancholy fact, that all through this country there is an over proportion of poverty and distress, which, among a hard-working, economical people like the English, can only arise from a bad system, or at least a system of government badly administered. As to the fact, "that the landlords have been induced to lower their rents in many instances," the instances are as one to a thousand. The newspapers here carefully announce every case of this description, and they are not on an average three a day. The habits of extravagance and luxury, indulged in so generally by the rich of this country, will prevent them from voluntarily relinquishing a portion of their incomes, except the alternative of all or nothing should present itself.

The committee then proceed to instance the years 1804 and 1814, when the same pressure was felt by the agricultural interests, and when the gloomy forebodings of the farmers were "dissipated by the natural course of seasons and events." They then comfort the starving tenantry with some excellent reasonings concerning "action and reaction;" "cause and effect;" "the distribution of capital;" "diminished value of currency;" "the extensive investments of capital in land;" "the coffers of the bank having been replenished by withdrawing coin from circulation;" "the high state of foreign exchange;" "the present price of silver:" in short, they hum over the self-same sing-song of political economy, which has so often and so successfully been employed in putting the people to sleep in the midst of their sufferings.

The committee then proceed to state the cause of the present distresses of agriculture, which, according to them, is nothing more than an abundant harvest! What must be the situation of a country, when its miseries arise from plenty, which is the case with England, if this assumption be true? And what must be the state of human intellect here, to believe in such a singular proposition, if it be not true? What a perversion of natural cause and effect must have taken place, before such an apparently preposterous proposition as this can acquire any basis of truth? A few years ago, the scarcity of bread-stuffs was adduced as the principal cause of the distresses of the manufacturers; now it is the superabundance of these that produces the distresses of the agriculturists. What a happy pass the cobblers and tinkers have brought this nation to, when neither scarcity nor plenty is a national blessing! I recollect a story of a man, who complained to Mahomet, that he had so much grain he could not sell it. The next year he had none, and complained still more. Whereupon Mahomet gave his farm to a poor basket-maker, who, though he had not half enough to eat, thanked Allah twelve times a day.

But absurd as it may appear, the proposition of the committee, with regard to the plenty of corn being the immediate cause of the agricultural depression is true, and it furnishes a practical illustration of the excellence of this government, as well as the wisdom of its legislators. But in order to understand this paradox, we must run over some of the preceding links of this chain of causes and effects. The price of grain at home bears no proportion, when the harvest is abundant, to the amount of poor-rates, tithes, and taxes; and even if there were a market abroad, the farmers are not permitted to export it. But if the poor-rates, rents, tithes, and taxes, were apportioned to the price of

grain, would not this superabundance of the bounties of heaven be a blessing instead of a curse? Certainly—but then the reduction of rents would not suit messieurs the landlords—the reduction of poor-rates would not suit messieurs the paupers—the reduction of tithes would not suit messieurs the right reverend bishops and clergy—and the reduction of taxes would by no means suit my lord the king, the ministers, pensioners, placemen, and above all, messieurs the fund-holders, who perhaps might not get their interest regularly, unless the sinking fund bestir itself handsomely to make up all deficiencies. You see plainly, therefore, my dear brother, that so long as there is any unexhausted nonsense in the vocabulary of political economy; any sophistry, juggling, deception, or coercion, that will quiet the wretched tenantry and manufacturers, there is no hope for them, since plenty ruins the one, and scarcity the other. The people must again, and still more severely, tax those powers of endurance, which have enabled them to bear what no other nation ever did before. Patience and the sinking fund are, therefore, highly recommended by the committee, as sovereign remedies for all incurable cases of this kind, this superabundance of the last year's harvest, this unlucky and highly inconvenient plenty of the good things of this life. The public debt is accumulating every year, and every year there is a necessity for borrowing more money than the sinking fund redeems; the taxes are every year falling more heavily on the remaining tenantry, in consequence of a vast many of these becoming paupers, or giving up their leases; the poor-rates are also annually becoming more oppressive from the same cause; the resources of the country are decreasing in its regular and profitable trade and agriculture—and yet the people of England are bidden to hope, that the sinking fund, and a certain "re-action,"

on which the committee strongly rely, will restore in no long time their ancient prosperity. Well may the committee recommend patience.

That you may the better understand the actual and fundamental causes of this depression in the agricultural interest, and be satisfied that poor rates, tithes, taxes, and rents, and not a "super-abundant harvest," are at the root of the evil, I will state to you some facts, which I neglected in the proper place. They will, however, come in well enough here, especially as they are entirely corroborated by testimony delivered to this very committee by agriculturists from different parts of the kingdom: In one of the counties, I was assured, that all agricultural produce had, within a given period, suffered a depression averaging thirty-five per cent. while the poor rates in the same period had advanced seventy-five, and the taxes about seventy per cent. The poor rates, in other counties, in many cases, amount to an assessment of from twelve to fifteen or sixteen shillings an acre per annum. In another place I was told by farmers, hard at work even in the midst of this hopeless state of things, that their actual losses upon the last year's crop amounted to as much as their whole rental. In other places, such is the depression of the tenantry, that they have not been able to pay a shilling of rent from one to two years past, and the landlords have permitted them to remain, because no others would occupy them, even on condition of paying tithes, taxes, and poor rates, and living rent free. In other places, warrants of distress for rent have been issued to four times the number ever known before, in the same period of time; and the shopkeepers have gone so far in some cases, as to enter into combinations not to trust the farmers, from a conviction of their total inability to pay. When I asked these unfortunate people, what pos-

able modification of things would relieve them, the answer invariably was, "*relief from tithes and taxes.*" All agreed, that it would be impossible to go on much longer, unless these were reduced at least one-third. This is impracticable without a reduction of the expenditures of the government, and the interest of the national debt. As to tithes, the clergy might possibly be brought to relinquish these, under a discipline similar to that king John exercised upon the rich Jew. Every way, therefore, it seems to me, that any salutary, permanent change in the situation of the English tenantry is hopeless, from any voluntary reduction of their burthens either by the government or the church. They must either be content to accept from the rich that charity which is exercised at the expense of their own labours; or emigrate; or boldly demand, that they be permitted to share in the blessings of that government, for the support of which they pay so dearly.

One thing, however, I cannot but commend in this shuffling and insidious "Report," which substitutes effects for causes, and shrinks from approaching the real sources of this polluted stream. It fairly acknowledges, "that the principles of free trade are now almost universally felt to be entirely consonant to liberality as well as policy, and that a departure from the old system of monopoly and bounty is called for as far as it be practicable." I am in good hopes that this tardy acknowledgment will operate to check the rising disposition of our republican government, to pamper one interest at the cost of another. You may assure our friend, the member from *****, that the fashion is just going out here, and that the English government would give lord Londonderry's head, lord Sidmouth's ears, and Mr. Vansittart's political economy, to be on the same footing in these matters with ourselves.

But the farmers and tenantry, in truth, begin to be quite tired with the amusement of these yearly tunes played over to them, for the purpose of filling their stomachs, and swelling their anticipations of the future. The political doctors and the mass of agriculturists are now precisely in the situation of the piper and his cow :

There was a piper had a cow,
And he had nought to give her ;
He took his pipes, began to play,
Consider, cow, consider.

The cow considered very well,
And to him gave a penny,
To play the same tune o'er again,
The " Corn riggs they are bonny."

Something to eat, something to relieve the wants of nature, instead of the tune of " Consider, cow, consider," is now required by the people of the country. I have the best grounds for believing, that, in a few months, somewhere about the sitting of Parliament, there will be meetings in many of the counties, not of radicals, but of the principal landholders, for the purpose of remonstrating against the wasteful prodigality of the government. The landlords, at least considerable numbers of them, have been unable to get any thing from their tenants, for the last year or two, and, in addition to this, are beginning to be alarmed with rumours of another income-tax, with a view to relieve the distresses of the tenantry, by deducting from their taxes, and putting the amount upon the landlords. Such is the wretched state to which Mr. Pitt's policy ; his system of funding, borrowing, and wasting, has brought Old England, the favourite of philosophy and song. All the mystery consists in relieving one class at the expense of another ; bleeding until the patient is

near fainting, and then filching a smelling bottle from his neighbour's pocket, to afford him a temporary resuscitation. It is thus that the present ministry supports itself, by playing off alternately the wants of the poor against the fears of the rich; arraying them from time to time in opposition to each other, and holding the balance of victory in its own hands. Should this income tax be laid, the consequences are pretty obvious. The landlords, who have been duped into the support of every arbitrary measure of late, and thus entirely lost the affections of the poor, will be unable to make head against ministers; while the tenantry will very probably laugh in their sleeves, and support the very ministry they have been accustomed to denounce and revile. Had the landlords made common cause with the tenants, they could have done what they pleased; but they were frightened at the "Spencerean system," and will ere long feel the consequences. They will have the privilege of being next devoured.

LETTER XIII.

London.

DEAR BROTHER,

THERE cannot be a more clear indication of a low state of religion, than the practice of insulting the Deity, by building churches, or making donations to pious objects, not as an atonement for past transgressions, but to obtain a dispensation for future ones. It is a miserable expedient of a miserable hypocrisy, to blind the people and bribe the church: the one to forget, the other to forgive the transgressions of a whole life of open and shameless profligacy. It was originally the invention of an age of ignorance, and answered the purpose of converting a robber and murderer, a spoiler of nations, a man, in short, who lived in the open violation of all moral principles, into a saint. In this way the calendar of saints became crowded with such worthies as St. George of England, and a hundred others, who would, otherwise, have figured in the Newgate Calendar of the times. This kind of atonement, without either repentance or amendment, is little better than an attempt to bribe the Judge. Something similar to this is attempting to be brought about, at the present day, by the advocates and supporters of legitimacy. It is their cue to be exceedingly pious, because they want the support of the established church, against the just complaints of the people.

But as it is beneath the dignity of a legitimate sovereign to restrain his passions, or rein in his royal impulses, the clergy have graciously been pleased to allow them absolution for all offences, except those against the church, at the price of supporting their privileges, pretending a great regard for the propagation of religion, building a few churches, and creating a few new bishoprics. The consequence is, that there is a greater number of extremely pious profligates among the present royal race of legitimates, than were ever before known—and that while there is a greater fashion of religion in this country, or at least in the newspapers, magazines, reviews, and party-pamphlets, there is quite as much profligacy and extravagance among the great, and crime among the little, as was ever before witnessed. This example of reconciling the warmest piety with the coolest departures from the precepts of morality, is too convenient not to be extensively followed. A profligate nobleman subscribes liberally to build churches, support missionaries, and convert jews, and he receives a tacit dispensation for what he has done or may hereafter do. Those who are too poor to give any thing, make all the amends they can by talking, and are pardoned their wicked actions in virtue of their pious words. Hypocrisy and cant, are, therefore, the order of the day; and the divorce of religion and morality is now as common among these people as other divorces are in Doctors' Commons. An age of superstitious observances is always an age of slavery, since the same ignorance which makes the people subservient to the one, fits them for the endurance of the other. It is for this reason, that the enemies of human freedom are so zealous in the propagation of a religion independent of good morals, and sustained by a privileged devotion, which gives to

the rich a latitude of indulgence extremely convenient, and takes from the poor all disposition to question the infallibility of the priesthood, or the divine right of the king.

“ But let us view these truths with closer eyes ” —although it is scarcely possible to question the excesses or abuses of religion, without being suspected of having no religion at all. And yet, when we examine the subject dispassionately, it cannot be denied, that among the best and truest friends of religion, will be found those who are most opposed to the wiles of hypocrisy and the excesses of fanaticism. I mean by fanaticism, that misguided feeling which reconciles a course of conduct directly in opposition to the laws of God and man, with true piety. Men, who have learned lessons from history and experience, are sufficiently aware of the great principle of reaction, not only in the elements, but in morals and religion. They have observed, that in every stage of the progress of mankind, the abuse of a good, almost invariably leads to the opposite extreme of bad ; and that fanaticism and skepticism succeed each other, with the regularity and certainty of night and day. The great principle of gravitation is in reality scarcely more universal than that of reaction, physical and moral. The excessive rigour of the Puritans, which might be said to approach sometimes almost to fanaticism, was succeeded by the total disregard of morals and religion, manifested in the court of Charles the Second. That monarch and his courtiers, it would seem, disdained even the affectation of morality and religion, because the Puritans, who had overturned his throne, and brought his father to the block, were distinguished for rigid morals and high-wrought piety. So also, because the revolutionists in France, in their headlong zeal to destroy those

abuses of religion, under which they had suffered for ages, declared war, as it were, against religion itself, the present king, and princes, and nobles of France, have taken the opposite extreme, and degenerated either into fanatics or hypocrites. Not to multiply instances, all experience goes to prove, *that religion can only rationally be expected to be regular, permanent, and beneficial to mankind at all times, which at all times keeps clear of the opposite extremes, and preserves the rational and happy medium between infidelity and fanaticism.* Such a religion will never be found interfering with the rights and duties of men in a state of society, nor making war upon the innocent amusements and useful occupations of life. Neither will such a religion ever be made a tool of party, or an instrument in propagating ignorance, under the pretence, that to enlighten the human mind, is to weaken the foundation of religion and good government. Whenever we observe it pursuing a contrary course, I believe it will generally be found under the direction of worldly motives, and to have its zeal quickened either by interest or ambition.

That the present age is in rapid progress to something nearly allied to fanaticism on one hand and infidelity on the other, is, I think, pretty evident from various indications; and it is equally clear, that the origin of this may be traced to political causes, which have in truth exercised in all ages a vast influence over religion. The kingdoms of Europe were all pretty much in the same situation. The church and state were every where combined, and mutually supported each other's prerogatives. The French Revolution, which shook these thrones, shook with them the pillars of the established churches, I mean those churches which shared with the kings and their

nobility a great portion of the wealth of nations. Connected thus by the strong tie of mutual interest, it is therefore obvious, that the ancient political and the ancient ecclesiastical establishments would make common cause against the claims and rights of the people. Their mutual fears would also operate still more to cement this bond of union, and the alliance for mutual defence. The example of this alliance in France was followed by the different states of Europe, whose similarity of situation dictated the same measures, and thus happened the wonderful coincidence of all the monarchs of that quarter, together with the princes and nobles becoming all at once extremely pious ; that is to say, so far as the support of a hierarchy was essential to their interests, and so far as the possession of piety did not carry with it the necessity of practising what they professed. In fact, there seems to have been a compromise, by which the faith of the monarch was to be accepted in lieu of all good works, except the good work of repressing those throes of misery among the nations, which sometimes came near to shake the throne and the hierarchy.

Two effects resulted from this cunning conspiracy. All those, who supported the throne and the *established church*, which last at length became synonymous with religion itself, were friends of order and religion as a matter of course. On the contrary, those who thought that causes, which have been gaining strength for centuries past, had accumulated to such a degree as to render some alterations in the old systems of government necessary to the welfare of mankind, were stigmatized as enemies to the true faith, as hostile to religion itself. In short, despotism became order, and an established church, with exclusive privileges, re-

ligion. To question the claims of the one was treason; of the other, infidelity.

In the natural course of things, these excellent synonymes found their way into our country. The two great parties, for and against the Revolution of France, in the United States, adopted in a great measure the cant which prevailed abroad, and opposed each other on the same grounds, though we had happily no privileged church nor privileged orders. Still, one party did not hesitate to stigmatize the other with being deficient in an orthodoxy, of which there was no standard among them; while the other maintained, with a greater appearance of reason, that there was no connexion between religion itself and a church with exclusive privileges, but what was arbitrary and injurious to the best interests of piety and morality. Thus the connexion between democracy and heterodoxy became naturalized among the opposers of the French Revolution in the United States. In horrible imitation of their prototypes abroad, a vast many people became advocates and converts of that "legitimate party," which disdains an alliance with moral principles, and can reconcile a breach of the moral duties with the sincerest devotion and the truest faith. Hypocrisy, however, has generally a number of sincere followers; and a simulated piety adopted, merely from political and interested motives, by the great, has produced, among a large portion of the lower orders, a species of fanaticism, which seems to be spreading over the face of the earth. The advocates of political freedom, in their solicitude to avoid the imputation of being without religion, because they do not adhere to an established church, seem determined to go even beyond legitimacy in the race of fiery zeal; so that it is probable, before long, we shall have nothing but fanatics and infidels, and

that rational religion will no longer be found among the nations of Europe, or the people of the United States.

The old denominations of the Christian church seem to be menaced with speedy annihilation, either by the downfall or desertion of their temples. In the churches of the present time, we seldom hear any of those warm and heartfelt exhortations to virtuous actions, or useful deeds, which were calculated to make both man and society better. In place of these, come boasts of perfectibility, coupled with menaces of eternal wrath against all those who indulge in the wickedness of good works, without having been "struck down" at a camp-meeting, or undergoing some mysterious regeneration, brought about in an instant by a direct communication, face to face, with Divinity itself. Hence we find a new species of saints springing up among us, who are canonized by their priests for committing murder, and repenting at the foot of the gallows.

The good old religion, in which you and I were brought up, and which happily united the abstract doctrines of faith with the practical precepts of virtue, instead of endeavouring, as I think it ought to have done, to check these howlings of fanaticism, looked on and approved. Nay, it did worse: instead of meeting by a vigorous exertion of its talents and influence, this religion of profligacy and crime, which must naturally spring from an absolute contempt, I may say detestation, of good works, it in some measure, as I believe I have observed before, fell in with the current, and added to its force. In place of inculcating the precepts of morality, the pastors of the episcopal church laboured to establish abstract principles, and explain metaphysical subtleties. Instead of a mild, practical, and social system of belief, calculated to re-

strain crimes and strengthen virtuous propensities, they, many of them, fell into the opposite extreme, and in place of warning against those vices and crimes that destroy the happiness and repose of mankind, they bent all their force to put down dancing and the theatres. Every thing, that did not in some degree connect itself with the outward forms of religion, was stigmatized as wicked, and the neglect of social duties became the standard of orthodoxy. The social circle, the domestic fire-side, were to be turned into conventicles, and all the cheerful, innocent recreations of social chat, or sprightly song, were swallowed up in the dismal gloom of fanaticism and superstition. Surely, my dear brother, this is not a religion to make man better; neither, I should think, can it be propounded to the people without going far to destroy their morals, and prostrate every barrier between virtue and vice. I am aware that, by a chain of metaphysical subtleties and nice distinctions, this mischievous doctrine of faith without works may be somewhat modified, so as not to involve a direct attack upon morals; but I also know, that the mass of ordinary hearers do not comprehend metaphysics: they will recollect the broad proposition, but the subtleties by which it is modified are neither remembered nor understood. Is it not highly probable, that a religion which banishes morality from its theory, will discard it also in practice? It is indeed a most convenient religion, equally suiting the madness of fanaticism and the discretion of hypocrisy. I thought it as well to put you right as to the real state of practical religion in this country. Our distant republic has been, for some years past, so overwhelmed with tidings of the progress of religion in England; so stunned with advertisements of her zeal and exertions for the propagation of the gospel, and the

diffusion of learning in all parts of the earth, that I question whether any testimony to the contrary would have the least weight in the United States ; neither, in truth, would it be worth the trouble, were it not for the reasons which have governed me in pointing out some other mistakes in the estimate of our countrymen concerning this nation and its government. Great efforts have been made of late, and are still making, to put republics and republicans out of the pale of humanity ; to enlist every amiable feeling and passion of the mind against the system of government under which I was born, and hope to die ; to prove, in short, that it is incompatible with either honest feelings or noble principles, although it is under this very system that the human mind has always attained its highest moral excellence, and displayed the noblest examples of virtuous heroism. Yet, in spite of the testimony of all history, which is directly against them, these advocates and supporters of tyranny not only labour to maintain, by assertion, their moral and intellectual superiority over the people of the United States, but to trace this pretended pre-eminence on the one hand, and this alleged inferiority on the other, to the nature and effects of their respective systems of government. Surely it behoves every American to do his best to refute this slander upon that freedom which he cherishes as one great source of his pride and happiness.

Religion, like every other great motive of action, is best known by its fruits. If in any country we find the people sober and orderly ; regular in the discharge of their social duties ; submissive to equal laws, that are essential to the security of person and property ; decent in their observance of the sabbath, and regular in their attendance on public worship, we may safely pronounce them un-

der the influence of a salutary religious impression. But if, on the other hand, we find the princes and the nobility, the rich and the high-born, contenting themselves with eating public dinners, drinking toasts, and subscribing a few guineas annually to the support of churches they never visit, or to missions in India or Africa ; while at the same time their conduct disgraces the religion they profess to assist in propagating, we may be pretty certain, that whatever the professions may be, there is little of real piety here. If money is to make atonement, without either repentance or amendment, the rich have still another advantage over the poor, who can only obtain pardon by repenting of their old, and avoiding all new transgressions. This is rather an aristocratic religion, which, I sincerely hope, will never make any great progress among our yankees.

You have no doubt heard of the million of pounds sterling, appropriated some two or three years since, at the recommendation of his present majesty, who is a great example of morals and religion, for the building of one hundred new churches in and about London. This was advertised and puffed to the uttermost corners of the earth, as if the Regent had himself bestowed this million from his own privy purse. No such thing, I assure you. It was a million extra, not drawn from his own pocket, but from the pockets of a starving people, already pressed to the earth with taxes. What rendered this appropriation still less praiseworthy, was the fact to which every man in this city can bear witness, that the episcopal churches already built are amply sufficient for all the purposes of public worship. The dissenting chapels and methodist tabernacles are indeed generally crowded; but the places of worship belonging to the established church are, I repeat again, never filled, ex-

cept on some extraordinary occasion. It is true, that the present churches in this city are not sufficient to hold the whole population of London, should they all attend public worship at one and the same time, a thing that never did nor ever can happen. But they are amply sufficient for every practicable purpose, and this appropriation of a million sterling of the overburthened people's money, is therefore, I do not hesitate to say, nothing better than a robbery committed upon them by a prince and a government, for the sole purpose of putting a deception upon the world.

Much more good would have resulted from this million, if it had been deducted from the amount of yearly taxes. This would have made a difference of two millions to the nation, and these two millions would have prevented a great many people from becoming paupers. Or supposing it had been appropriated to feeding, clothing, and educating some of the thousands of little half-naked, half-starved, and wholly ignorant wretches, who prowl about this city, and seem to be nursed in crime even at the mother's breast. After having brought these to a sense of duty, and an impression of religious awe, if it were found that there were not churches sufficient to accommodate them, *then* would have been the season for building more. To preach to the hungry and the naked, is to howl out to the tiger and the wolf; the wants of nature must be first supplied, and the body relieved from the cravings of hunger, before the mind can receive the impression of moral and religious truths. You may as well give a stone to him who asks for bread, as religious instruction to one who is starving. For these causes it is, that whenever I hear of building new churches here, or instituting societies for inculcating religion into these hungry beings, I cannot but think, they are

wasting their time and throwing away their money. Give them wholesome employment, and wages that will enable them to purchase wholesome food, and in no long period they will build their own churches, and learn to read and write without the intervention of charitable societies.

As it is, however, the lower orders here do certainly exhibit a deplorable want of true religious feeling and instruction, similar to that of a great portion of the higher classes. The observance of the sabbath is no bad criterion of the moral as well as religious feelings of a people. I will therefore shortly contrast the mode in which the commonalty of London and Paris amuse themselves on Sundays, and for this purpose describe some of the objects and incidents, which occurred to a friend of mine, in a Sunday's ramble not long ago.

"I began," said he, "by a visit to the church of St. Sepulchre, in the reasonable hope of an hour of quiet devotion; but even here the genius of John Bull penetrated in the form of a drunken man, who made his way up the aisle to the great disturbance of the preacher and congregation. By the aid of a peace officer or the beadle, I don't know which, he was forced out of church, and lodged in prison. When brought up afterwards to answer for this offence before the magistrate, it came out that this wretched being was a regularly ordained clergyman of the church of England, and not long since a very popular preacher at the west end of the town. He had married the daughter of a banker, and had, it appeared, a fine family of children. He was in the receipt of an allowance from the navy, which he spent immediately in drunkenness and debauchery, and passed the rest of his time in penury and distress. The magistrate, in consideration of his family, discharged him with an admonition, as I afterwards heard.

“From St. Sepulchre’s, I took my way towards London bridge, which I crossed, and proceeded up Borough High Street, Long Lane, King’s Road, the Blue Anchor, and so to Surry canal. It is in the environs of London that the common people frequently spend their Sundays; because of late the city is so thronged with spies, peace officers, and agents of the societies for suppressing vice, that the genius of John Bull is quite repressed within the bills of mortality. But in the out-skirts, and the fields adjoining the city, there is not so much of the fear of the police before the eyes of the people, and it is there that one sees a variety of Sabbath amusements, that redound very little to the honour of Old England. Though the taverns *affect* to be shut at these times, yet drinking goes on as merrily as ever. In one place you could see a group of tipplers, who were disposing of a part of their week’s wages in spirits; noisy and turbulent beyond control—at another, a fat rogue nodding over a pot of beer, like the genius of stupidity in his most stupid mood, saturating himself with this inspiring beverage, and making merry after the fashion of what they call sober, decent, and moral people here. I occasionally observed one of these regular fellows, with his wife and children, forming a family party at beer-drinking, and nothing could possibly equal the sleepy brutality of the whole group. Drinking indeed seemed to be the sole amusement left to the people on this day of rest, except occasionally a snug little boxing match, a fight between two bull dogs, or something of that kind sufficiently exciting to awake their beer-smothered energies.

“I had the good fortune to witness one of these pleasant and amusing spectacles, in a snug little by-place, where the ten millions of eyes of the police did not penetrate. As it is quite impossible

for me to do justice to this scientific exhibition, you will let me off with an extract from the London Morning Chronicle, the fashionable paper of the day, which is very particular in noticing these rencontres for the amusement of ladies and gentlemen of ton. Thus it runs—‘The interest excited in England to see a boxing-match, may be judged from the fact that in a late contest between Randal and Martin for three hundred guineas a side, it was calculated there were not less than ten thousand persons assembled, among whom, says the account, were many persons of apparent respectability. The interior of the circle formed by the carriages was excessively crowded, and on being beat out formed a line eight feet deep. The first ranks were, according to pugilistic law, forced to sit down, the second rank to kneel, the third to stoop, and the remainder made the best shift they could to take a bird’s-eye view through the interstices which were left between the heads of those who stood before them. The fight lasted about seven minutes and a half, Martin lying, like a lump of clay, lifeless. The force of the blows he received upon the neck is supposed to have produced a temporary apoplexy. Thousands of guineas were bet upon the event of this battle. One gentleman lost five thousand pounds, and another eighteen hundred guineas.’

“The battle I saw was not one of such high fashion, and was fought for a gallon of beer a side. The parties appeared to be very expert at pomeling, however; and the fight, agreeably to a stop-watch, held by a well-dressed person, who appeared equally interested and delighted with the spectacle, lasted twenty-five minutes and fifteen seconds. In the conclusion, one of the parties was beat stone blind; and, to use a knowing phrase of my friend with the stop-watch, “distil-

led claret plentifully from his ears and nostrils." I never saw such a beastly inhuman sight. The poor wretch who was beaten was carried off amidst the hisses of those who had bet and lost money upon him, while the conqueror was greeted with more heartfelt applauses, than ever fell to the lot of Lord Wellington, or even "the greatest and most beloved monarch England ever saw." It being sabbath-day, however, I understood their enthusiasm was somewhat repressed by the fear of magisterial interference. By the way, nothing can equal the sensitive delicacy of an Englishman's feelings, when in a foreign country. His humanity shrinks from every exhibition which has become a part of the national taste, while his religious feelings are outraged by every thing he has not been used to at home. The very newspapers and magazines which record without blushing these instances of English ferocity, will exclaim with infinite and self-sufficient satisfaction at the profanation of the sabbath in France, where, instead of drinking and fighting on Sunday, the lower orders of the people go to the public gardens, to hear music, drink a little lemonade, and exercise themselves in dancing. Those little Sunday fêtes, in which, after church, the people recreate themselves, in a thousand innocent amusements, wherein neither public decency nor public morals are violated, are considered by honest John Bull infinitely worse than drunkenness and fighting, although a stranger, who has visited both countries, without prejudice in favour of either, must acknowledge, that even music and dancing are preferable to drunkenness and debauchery, their substitutes here. Nothing, in fact, can present a more complete contrast than the lively Parisians, gay, yet not noisy and turbulent, walking in groups, or dancing in sprightly parties, or witnessing some

little exhibition in the public gardens on Sunday afternoon, and the stupid intoxication or roaring ferocity of a party of labouring Londoners, who are prohibited by law from being either gay or happy on Sunday. It used to be one of my favourite pleasures to visit the garden of Tivoli, where the people of Paris on Sunday were sporting among roses and honeysuckles, enjoying a thousand wholesome exercises, and refreshing themselves in little bowers with ice and lemonade. Sometimes I used to ramble as far as *Près Saint Germain*, where immense crowds from the city resorted for air and exercise; and where lilies, roses, and vines, and shepherds and their sheep, and little purling streams and shady woods, all contributed to form a scene calculated to soften the heart, and wean it for a moment at least from the passions and seductions of a great city. I never saw a drunken man at any of those places, nor any battle except between two lap-dogs, nor any indecency of any kind. Yet have I stood and laughed in spite of me to see a John Bull amateur of boxing Sabbath parties, contemplating these scenes, shrugging his shoulders, and stuffing his self-conceit with comparisons to the advantage of English decorum.

“I cannot better illustrate this distinguishing feature of the English character, than by relating a singular circumstance connected with this battle, of which I gave you a sketch just now. A few days after this affair took place, I happened to light on a Picture of Madrid, as it was called, communicated by an English traveller to the editor of a London literary paper, and by him published. In this, of course, the bull-fights were introduced, for the purpose of giving John Bull an opportunity of pluming himself on his superior humanity. The following passage is most material to my purpose.

After various preliminaries, the writer proceeds—
 “Half a squadron of chasseurs on horseback, having at their head the Alcalde with two Alguazils, in the ancient Spanish costume, clear the circus of the people who had hitherto thronged it. The *Picadores* in their half Moorish dresses, the *Banderilleros* in the magnificent Moorish costume, and the proud *Motadores* enter the lists. The barriers are opened, and the savage bull rushes in. *But excuse me from describing the sanguinary scene which now ensues. More than once have I averted my eyes from the revolting sight; and I can explain why the word murder excites no horror in a Spaniard; he utters it a thousand times with sensations of the highest satisfaction and pleasure.*” I was much pleased with the humanity of this writer, till I accidentally discovered him to be the identical gentleman with the stop-watch, who enjoyed the “spilling of the claret” at the boxing-match with such singular zest! Nobody on the face of the earth could have persuaded this philanthropist, that setting bulls and dogs fighting was quite as respectable amusement as doing the like with men; or that an Alcalde and a company of soldiers were quite as humanely employed in keeping order at a bull fight, as in shooting unarmed people at Cumberland Gate, or cutting them to pieces at Manchester.”

Sunday is a great day all over England for beating drums and parading soldiers. Almost every town has a body of troops in or near it, to keep the people in subjection to this happy government. These are almost invariably drawn out on Sunday, either for the purpose of overawing the people, and preventing insurrections in the peaceful village churches, or to give the rural lasses an opportunity of falling in love with the fine red coats. Of consequence, the Sabbath, instead of being a

day of peace, piety, and innocent relaxation, is perpetually disturbed with the beating of drums, and the clattering of horses' hoofs. You know I am not much given to canting, but still I reverence the Sabbath sufficiently, to regret that the paraphernalia of war should thus perpetually intrude where devotion should remain sacred and undisturbed by rolling drums and glittering guns. On these occasions I could not help calling to mind a passage of an old book—"They were happy days, when your captain was a poor, lean, humble thing, and the soldier tame, and durst not come within the city for fear of a whipping-post."

If a stranger wishes to see how the people of fashion spend their Sunday mornings, that is to say, from two till five in the afternoon, he should go to Hyde Park. Here he will see Corinthians, fine ladies, and sons of aspiring cits, galloping, galloping, galloping; and trotting, trotting, trotting, in one eternal "never-ending and still beginning" circle, admiring themselves and envying each other. The great pleasure arising from this pretty variety of round and round, seems to be the stupid admiration of the commonalty, who stare at these great ones, and decide upon the claims of each rider, horse, and equipage. It is impossible to describe the vast variety of extravagance exhibited on these occasions, or the whimsical diversity of riders and equipages. This exhibition of vanity continues, till it is time to go home and dress for dinner, to a good appetite for which, half the lives of the young Corinthians are devoted.

The state of religion in every country is also pretty clearly indicated by the manners and morals of the clergy. If instances of frivolity, indecorum, and servility occur frequently among them, it is pretty certain they are not properly impressed

with a feeling of their dignity or their duties. I am no advocate for a proscription of smiles or amusements that are innocent in themselves ; but of the two, I had rather see this rigour carried to an extreme in the deportment of a preacher, than give place to a relaxation which would bring himself and his calling into contempt. The family quarrel between the king and the late queen gave rise to some curious exhibitions of clerical charity, decorum, forbearance, and independence. You are aware, that the present form of church service, the Common Prayer, &c. was established by act of parliament, and that of course it ought not to be altered, according to the constitution of church government, without the consent of a convocation. The praying for the Queen is a part of the service of the church ; and no clergyman of the Church of England, in this country, was legally, much less spiritually, bound to obey any order of council, any intimation of the king as head of the church, to omit that portion. In charity they were still more bound to pray for her, if she were guilty of the wickedness laid to her charge. But among all the bishops and beneficed clergy, I have not heard of half a dozen, that had the hardihood to pray for her Majesty in opposition to the will of the king. On the contrary, one clergyman has been tried and found guilty of a libel uttered in the pulpit against this unhappy female ; another was lately convicted of an assault upon his bell-ringer, who persisted in ringing the bell in honour of her Majesty ; while others have put advertisements in the newspapers, contradicting reports that they had prayed for the Queen ! In short, they have, in almost every instance, proved that they valued the favour of the king beyond the Book of Common Prayer, or the church service, any part of

which, I presume, they would equally dispense with at his Majesty's command.

To conclude: most of the superiority of this country in religion will be found to originate in newspaper advertisements and missionary magazines, speeches in parliament, and declarations of the king. If we try it by any other standard, it will be found entirely unsupported. If we look to morals as a criterion of religion, and to crimes as a test of morals, there is no foundation for this claim. If we look to other outward indications, such as a respect for public decorum; an observance of the Sabbath; a friendly regard to other nations; or a general benevolence, indicated by a habit of speaking of them with temper and decorum; a desire of preserving peace and good will with their neighbours on the continent, or the distant people of the other quarters of the globe—there is still less foundation for this boast. Her practice has never been to speak well of other nations. Her wars, for the last hundred years, have been more frequent than those of any other country. In every quarter of the globe she has warred against the human race, through the impulses of ambition and avarice. Asia, Africa, and America, can tell of her oppressions; and if she thinks she can make amends to them, or deceive the world, by sending missionaries and Bibles to pave the way for a still greater extension of trade and empire, I think she is mistaken. The veil is dropping lower and lower every day, and the physiognomy of the hypocrite becoming more visible to the eyes of the world.

I have been thus particular in pointing out the little pretension this people and government have to a superiority in religion, from a desire to comply with your special request. I do not wish to question the claims of any nation

to an idle pre-eminence, unless it makes it arrogant and offensive, and is coupled with a disposition to plume itself on the pretended inferiority of my own countrymen : then it becomes my duty to repel the charge, by questioning the justice of the claim.

LETTER XIV.

London.

DEAR BROTHER,

THOMAS PAINE, although his "Age of Reason" was answered and refuted so completely in this country, is still, though dead, an object against which the fears of this government are strongly directed. To buy or read his book is considered an overt act of disaffection, if not treason ; and to sell it, subjects a bookseller to a prosecution, although he may vend the works of Tindal, Bolingbroke, Hume, Gibbon, Swift, Rabelais, and Voltaire, in perfect security. This the most orthodox booksellers do without scruple ; and what is more, the most orthodox of the clergy and nobility buy them with as little. It is true, that Paine has treated the religion of our fathers with indecent scurrility ; whereas most of those who previously attacked it, preserved an air of respect, which only made their efforts the more dangerous. This is not, however, the case with Tindal, Woolston, Swift, Rabelais, and Voltaire, whose works, as I observed before, are still vended by the Trade,

who, as there is no law to the contrary, settle the point of conscience quietly among themselves.

Not long ago, I alarmed the shopman of the worthy bookseller, to whom, I believe, I introduced you in a former letter, by inquiring for a copy of Paine's works. This honest fellow has lived so much among books, that he resembles an exceedingly old edition of a man by Caxton or Wynkyn de Worde. In reply to my question, he pursed up his mouth into an excruciating vinegar expression, and assured me they never kept any such vile trash in the store. I believe I have almost lost his good opinion, for he eyes me ever since with a look of suspicion, and I begin to believe takes me for a confirmed Radical.

This worthy and well-meaning man, however, on my inquiring for Voltaire and the rest, very courteously handed me a quarto of Tindal, from which he brushed the dust with an air of great devotion, being one of those excellent scholars who actually worship a great book. What I mean to infer from this toleration of other deistical works, and this inveterate persecution of Paine, is simply, that a regard to the interests of religion has nothing to do with the matter. I am no advocate or defender of Paine's theological opinions. Though I look upon him as one of the most clear and able advocates of human rights, I certainly have no respect whatever for his religion or morality. By his attacks on the Bible, he has not only meditated a great injury to the welfare and happiness of mankind here and hereafter, but he has likewise vitally injured the interests of human freedom, by affording its enemies a pretext to couple it with infidelity. Because the same writer happened to advocate the rights of man, and question the authority of the Scriptures, occasion has been taken to establish a sort of affinity between

the unbeliever and the republican, which would probably never have been thought of, had it not been that the example of Paine afforded a pretext for this preposterous association. For this reason, I am apt to think him one of the worst enemies to liberty; and that, so far as his influence extends, he has actually retarded the progress of freedom more than all the efforts of the Holy Alliance.

But though the pretence set up by the ministry, the beneficed clergy, and indeed all those orthodox people here, who enjoy more than their share of the good things of this life, for persecuting Paine and his opinions, is that of religion; yet nothing is clearer to my mind, than that his political opinions are almost exclusively the objects of their apprehension and hostility. If he had only maintained the divine right of kings, I believe he might have questioned any other divine right with impunity. As it was, he afforded, by his religious, a pretext for prohibiting the circulation of his political opinions; and although his morals were quite equal, I am inclined to think, to most of the kings and princes of this age, he left behind him a reputation which has deprived his opinions of a great portion of their weight and authority. His Age of Reason has been triumphantly refuted by men who were made bishops for their good service: yet such are the apprehensions still entertained by the good ministry and church of England, that though his book has been thus entirely subdued, they have actually outlawed its disarmed heresies, and made it penal to print or to read "this flippant, nonsensical, and dangerous blasphemy." Nothing, my dear brother, so strongly indicates the weakness of a government, as the fear of a book. It is a sign of a presumptive habit in any system, religious or political, when it shrinks from the battery of truth, much more when it is afraid even of the sapping of false-

hood. When a single volume, a single newspaper, or a single individual becomes an object of royal, ministerial, noble, or clerical apprehension, it would seem to indicate, that the edifice, which thus trembles at every blast, is destitute of a proper basis of truth or utility, to sustain it against reason, ridicule, or declamation.

In witnessing thus the whole force of the government applied to the suppression of a single book, one might be tempted to suppose, that Thomas Paine was the first English writer, who ventured to question the authority of the Bible, and the truth of revealed religion; or, at all events, that the present king was the only pious monarch, and the present ministers the only pious ministers, this country has been blessed with since the days of lord Herbert of Cherbury. It is evident that the objects of this zeal against the works of Paine are, first, to fasten upon all free governments like ours, the imputation of heresy; to impute as far as possible to the advocates of human rights a hostility to revealed truths, and finally, to identify on all occasions the instruments of tyranny and oppression, with the inflexible supporters of piety and religion. That I may prove to you it is not republics and democracies alone, which produce these mischievous heretical poisons, but that deistical writers may grow up and flourish in the hallowed soil of monarchy, and that religious unbelief may be coupled with a most loyal attachment to hereditary kings—I will give you a short sketch of a long race, which flourished from time to time in this country within the two last centuries; some of them dignitaries of the church, others ministers of state, and not a few pensioned by their kings.

The first of these, I believe, who made any figure, and revived in England those ancient disputes, which, after convulsing the world under the

Greek emperors, were quelled by the authority and the fires of the papacy, was lord Herbert of Cherbury. He was one of the bravest, most gallant, and accomplished persons of the seventeenth century, a courtier and scholar combined. He has written his own life with a degree of candour and openness, which seems to prove him incapable of deceit or falsehood, and from which it appears that he was somewhat spoiled by the admiration of the ladies, with whom he was a great favourite on account of his wit, gallantry, and great personal beauty. Lord Herbert was every where celebrated for his generosity and magnanimity; nor can it be denied that he carried the point of honour to a pitch that might almost be called fantastical. He filled several offices about the court of England, and was ambassador at the court of France for some time. Here he first printed his work, "*De veritate prout distinguitur a Revelatione.*" This tract is a vindication of natural religion, which he maintains to be in itself perfect without the aid of revelation. That he might clearly understand, whether his work was agreeable to Heaven, he adopted the following method of consulting its will previous to the publication. "I took," he says, "my book '*De Veritate*' in my hands, and kneeling on my knees, devoutly said these words, O thou eternal God, author of the light that now shines on me, and giver of all inward illumination! I do beseech thee, of thy infinite goodness, to pardon a greater request than I, a sinner, ought to make. I am not satisfied enough, whether I shall publish this book *De Veritate*; if it be for thy glory, I beseech thee give me some sign from Heaven; if not, I will suppress it. I had no sooner spoke these words, than a loud, though gentle noise came from Heaven, (for it was like nothing on earth,) which did so comfort

and cheer me, that I took my petition as granted, and that I had the sign demanded."

Two or three things appear pretty certain from this quotation. His lordship's candour, sincerity, and superstition are clearly evinced. It seems evident that he was solicitous for the truth, and that he not only doubted his own reasonings, but was resolved that his readers should not remain ignorant that his decision rested on a miracle. I should think no man, not sincere in his belief, and at the same time free from dogmatism, the common fault of almost all zealous advocates, would have so freely acknowledged that he doubted his own theory. The miracle might possibly have passed, had not lord Herbert afterwards joined the parliament, in the subsequent civil war with Charles the first. This is another proof, no doubt, of the natural association of republicanism and heterodoxy. His brother George Herbert was one of the most abject flatterers of James the first, whom he placed above all the sages of Greece and Rome. On being presented with a good living, he turned his attention to his pastoral duties, which he performed, during the rest of his life, with such purity, sincerity, and devotion, that he has always been considered the model of a rural divine, and the original of the exalted character described with such simple beauty in his "Country Parson." Nothing can present a more perfect contrast, than the high chivalric courtier, who staked his life upon the nice punctilios of the point of honour, who was the model of princes and the favourite of queens; and his humble brother, performing his duties to his flock, with the meekness and peaceful industry of a primitive pastor, in those days when neither the lust of power nor wealth had corrupted the preachers of the gospel.

Thomas Hobbes was one of the most learned and scientific men of his age, and among the most acute reasoners, although entirely worsted in a mathematical controversy with the famous Dr. Wallis. He was a person of great purity and simplicity of character, and held with Socrates, that a man was bound to conform to the religion established by government. Hobbes traces religion to a fear of invisible powers, and an ignorance of second causes, which ascribes natural or accidental appearances to supernatural power. Inspiration, he affirms, is a sign of madness; the immortality of the soul and a belief in a future state, as hearsay; and the distinction between soul and body, as a modern branch from the old root of Grecian demonology; that the truth of the scriptures rests altogether upon the decisions of councils and the will of magistrates, who are the interpreters in authority, whose dicta must be obeyed. He also maintained, that a subject might conscientiously comply with the will of his sovereign, acting as God's vicegerent, even to the denying of Christ in words, while he cherished him in his heart. It was this courtly doctrine of the king's supremacy, that probably procured him the patronage of king Charles, who settled a pension upon him. He also was all his lifetime patronised by the earl of Devonshire, at whose house he died in the year 1679. Unluckily, however, he was not a democrat, and therefore affords no support to the prevailing theory of the inflexible affinity between freedom in politics and free opinions in religion. Antony Wood says, that Hobbes retracted many of his opinions, and wrote an apology for his writings; but this story is doubted. Hobbes had however the misfortune to please no sect. The catholics disliked his doctrine of submission to the temporal power in matters of faith; the protestants thought he carried it too far, and were outraged

at his stubborn heresies; while the dissenter, equally with the catholics, denounced his notion that they were bound to the religion of the king, let it be what it might. He got a pension, however, for greater heresies than Tom Paine ever dreamed of.

Lord Shaftesbury was a cotemporary of Hobbes, but not, like him, an advocate for the divine right of kings, being a steady opposer of arbitrary power, although by no means a republican. He wrote the famous "Characteristics," and was justly esteemed one of the most elegant scholars and well read persons of the age. His style of writing, though condemned by Blair, has been much admired by fine judges. Though lord Shaftesbury, in his dialogue of "the Moralists," most eloquently supports the doctrines of a Deity and superintending Providence, yet he is never solicitous to hide his doubts respecting the divinity of Christ. Hence he must be classed with those, who, like Paine, have been the opponents of religion, according to the opinions of orthodox writers, although in other respects an advocate of virtue, and an enemy to arbitrary power. For this last reason, while Hobbes was pensioned, Shaftesbury lost his place of vice-admiral of Dorsetshire, and continued out of favour with queen Anne.

Bolingbroke, the cotemporary of Pope and Swift, and one of the finest English writers, imitated by Burke, and praised by all the wits of his time, also wrote against revealed religion. After the publication of his tracts, the grand jury of Westminster presented them as calculated to subvert religion, morality, and government. They have, however, continued to be publicly vended in this country ever since; and have met their antidote, as all such writings should do, not in the persecution of their author, or the proscription of his book, but in able and sa-

tisfactory refutations. Bolingbroke's opinions on religious subjects were undoubtedly known during his life, for he was not a man to keep them secret; yet he was secretary of state to queen Anne, and owed his subsequent disgrace and attainder, not to his religious, but his political opinions. His favourite doctrine was, that atheists were much less dangerous than divines. How came he to escape being burnt!

Matthew Tindal was another bold and bitter enemy to christianity, cotemporary with Bolingbroke. He was the son of a clergyman, and a doctor of laws at Oxford. He turned catholic at the instance of some Roman missionaries, but afterwards returned to the church of England. He wrote a book called "The rights of the Christian Church vindicated," &c. which waked up the high church clergy, who would go to sleep at their fat stalls, if it were not for a blast of heterodoxy to awaken them now and then. Tindal was furiously assailed as a deist, and his publishers indicted. He afterwards published a defence of this work, which was ordered by the house of commons to be burnt by the common hangman, in the same fire with Sacheverell's sermons. Like many other men, Tindal finding himself persecuted on suspicion of heterodoxy, was spurred on by a sense of injury and injustice perhaps, to direct opposition. He accordingly wrote a book, called "Christianity as old as the Creation;" in which he boldly and directly maintained the broadest principles of natural religion, and denied all external revelation. But his politics, as usual, atoned for his heterodoxy; being a stanch advocate of the Hanoverian succession, he enjoyed a pension of two hundred sterling a year from George the first. Tindal fell under the lash of Pope in his *Dunciad*, because he was not only a whig, while Pope was a jacobite, but

wanted taste to admire the poet, whom he pronounced a mere versifier of Bolingbroke's splendid nothings. Pope took ample vengeance by placing Tindal's name where it will long be noticed by those who never read his "Religion of Nature."

Toland, author of "Christianity not Myste-
rious," the "Pantheisticon," and other works, was a haughty, bold spirit, exasperated by opposition into open and violent assaults on christianity. Being prosecuted in Ireland for his first work, he threw aside disguise, and afterwards came to England, where he published the others, which contain the most undisguised attacks. But though prosecuted in Ireland for the most moderate of his productions, he remained unmolested in England for the most violent of them all, and neither suffered in person nor property, although heterodox in the extreme. He was accused of dying with a blasphemous prayer in his mouth, beginning with "Omnipotens et sempiterne Bacche," &c. But this is probably a calumny, as the prayer, according to Voltaire, was composed two centuries before, for a society of tipplers. He died with perfect composure, saying, "I am going to sleep."

Anthony Collins, author of "A Discourse on Free-thinking," "A Discourse of the grounds and reasons of the Christian Religion," and various other controversial works, was a man of extraordinary ability, as well as great private and public virtues; but he was one of the most dangerous enemies to orthodoxy that ever lived, not excepting David Hume, whom he resembled in many respects. Instead of being persecuted for his opinions, he successively enjoyed the most honourable public offices, such as deputy lord-lieutenant of Essex, and treasurer of that county. On his death-bed he appealed to his Maker for the purity of his intentions in all his writings. He was a friend and

correspondent of Mr. Locke, who had a great regard for him, and his most bitter adversaries always treated him with respect. They thought it better perhaps to take the trouble of refuting him by their learning, than to resort to the more easy and expeditious method of the modern church of England, clamour and persecution.

Thomas Woolston was a cotemporary with Collins, and mingled in the controversy with him and Dr. Clarke, who, perhaps, of all the champions of orthodoxy, was the most able, learned, and tolerant. He refuted Woolston, and interfered for his release when imprisoned for a fine which he could not pay, condemning every species of religious persecution. Woolston was, in the latter part of his life, reputed mad by his opponents, and yet at the same time was prosecuted by the attorney-general for his heresies; for it happened, unluckily for him, that his opinions coincided with neither party, being far more extravagant than those of lord Herbert, or any of his successors. He belonged to no faction, and was persecuted by one, without being protected by the other. His moral character was however without reproach; and his last words were, "This is a struggle which all men must go through, and which I bear not only patiently but willingly;" certainly neither the words of a madman nor unbeliever. Woolston was offered his freedom from prison, if he would promise to refrain from the further publication of his opinions. This he refused, and it is said that he died in jail, although from the best authorities, and the testimony of eye-witnesses, it appears that he obtained his liberty, and died peaceably at his own house. He maintained that the miracles of our Saviour were all allegorical, and attempted to explain their mystical sense. Such was the demand for his discourses against the miracles, that three editions, of ten thousand copies

each, were sold by himself at his own house in a very short time.

Thomas Chubb was a person of extraordinary natural abilities, which he managed greatly to improve by study, although successively engaged as apprentice to a glover, and assistant to a tallow-chandler. His first work was published in conjunction with the celebrated Whiston, who, together with Pope and many other persons, admired his talents greatly. He was in truth a philosopher of nature's forming. In his book, entitled "The supremacy of the Father asserted," &c. his object was to prove the Son a being of inferior order to the Father. It engaged him eventually in a whole life of controversy, though he escaped legal prosecution and clerical persecution. Being charged with hostility to revealed religion, he proceeded to justify himself; and, as often happens, in the zeal to defend himself, advanced into the very errors with which he was charged; he at length came to the point, and placed the Saviour in the highest rank of teachers and moralists, such as Socrates and Confucius. He was a man of great purity and simplicity of character, and so disinterested; that he refused to accept any addition to his income, which was already equal to his wants. The famous Dr. Clarke, the two Hoadleys, the bishop and Dr. John, although they rejected and opposed his theory, bore testimony to his ability and virtues. But it must be remembered, this was before it became orthodox to take away a man's character for disagreeing in opinion. Chubb, however, like many others of his class, is now known principally through the writings of his adversaries, and has more reputation than readers.

But of all those writers who attacked religion under many masks, and in various ways, there is none who took such liberties, and broke so many severe

jests as Swift, a beneficed clergyman of the church of England. His Tale of a Tub is one of the bitterest satires ever written ; nor do I believe any works now extant, not even excepting those of Rabelais and Paine, so well calculated to weaken our respect and reverence for the scriptures. He possessed an admirable vein of humour, with an invention that supplied him with all sorts of incidents in which to display it ; and having chosen the vehicle of a romance, has had more readers than all the preceding catalogue of writers put together. By placing the pulpit side by side with the gallows and mountebank's stage, as theatres for the display of eloquence, he did what would in preceding ages have cost him his life. Yet he escaped persecution, and was rewarded with a rich benefice. His only punishment was not obtaining an English bishopric. The matter is easily explained ; he was the partisan of ministers, and the advocate of tory principles.— This merit atoned for his having soused the christian religion all over with ridicule. But I forget— he had another merit ; he made the catholic more ridiculous than any other, which procured him toleration from the protestant divines.

It is not generally known, nor is it mentioned, that I recollect, by any of his biographers, that Swift borrowed the idea of his Tale of a Tub from an eastern story of considerable antiquity, called "The Three Rings." An old man, having three sons, leaves each one at his death a ring ; they fall together by the ears about which is entitled to the handsomest. After long debates and furious contentions, they make the discovery that the three rings are all perfectly alike. The father signifies Theism, and the three sons typify Judaism, Christianity, and Mahomedanism. The three coats of Peter, Martin, and Jack, and the three

rings, suggest nearly the same ideas, and the resemblance in the plans is certainly not accidental.

You will perhaps be surprised to learn, that not only Newton and Locke, but even Jeremy Taylor, whose merits have lately risen from oblivion through the agency of a popular review, were, in their day, charged with hostility to revealed religion. Of Locke it was affirmed, that he even denied the immortality of the soul, while some innocent expressions of Newton were construed into doubts of the divinity of the Saviour. Jeremy Taylor, bishop of Down and Connor, was born at Cambridge early in the seventeenth century. His father was a barber. He was chaplain and advocate of Charles the First, previously to his promotion to his Irish bishoprics. He afterwards published his *Theologia Eclectica*, for which he was violently accused of disloyalty to the trinity. He had in fact no great opinion of the subtleties of the Athanasian creed; but his great offence, was being an advocate for toleration to a greater extent than suited the times. Antony Wood accuses him of having sinister political designs in this work; but there seems no ground for the charge.

During the eighteenth century, England appears to have produced no other writers against orthodoxy of particular note, except Hume, Gibbon, and Thomas Paine. The preceding century had exhausted the subject in a great degree, or perhaps few persons had the hardihood to resume a controversy, which not only ensured a life of contention, but a bad name after death. David Hume, however, the most cool and philosophical of Scotsmen, published, during the last century, his "Dialogues concerning Natural Religion," and "Essays on Suicide," which last contains those principles that have called forth the abuse and reproaches of thousands who have never read them, and know not

what they contain. He was certainly a most sturdy Heterodoxian ; and though more temperate as well as decorous in his style and manner, aimed greater blows at religion and the immortality of the soul than Paine himself. But his History of England made amends for his skepticism, by its orthodox precepts inculcating the divine right of kings. Hume became secretary to embassies and charge des affaires ; received a pension from the king ; was admired and respected by the first men of the age ; and finally died like Socrates, leaving behind him one of the best characters on record.

Not long after the "Essays on Suicide," appeared the celebrated "History of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire," by Edward Gibbon. Gibbon had turned catholic when young, and was sent to a calvinist minister at Lausanne by his father, with a view of having him brought back to his mother church. The experiment was successful, and Gibbon abjured his errors. Two chapters of his great work gave offence to the ruling church here. In relating the progress of the christian religion, he ascribes much of its success to temporal influence ; in short, he maintains that secondary causes had highly favoured the first establishment of the church. These chapters of Gibbon were made the pretext perhaps, for avenging the tales he has told of the profligacy of some of the early patrons of the church—the ridicule he has cast upon some of the most frivolous grounds of church divisions and ecclesiastical persecutions—and above all, the light he has thrown upon the creed of St. Athanasius. To these offences may be added the terrible liberties he has taken with the Reverend George of Cappadocia, tutelary saint of England. This worthy he proves to have been one of the most corrupt, unprincipled rogues of his time, by testimonials which are of unquestionable authority. St. George

is, however, the patron of more orders of knight-hood than any saint in the calendar, and figures as the tutelary of the most noble order of the garter, of which his excellent copyist, his present majesty, is grand master. He was assailed by many writers of the established church, and will descend to posterity as the enemy of true religion. But his politics were right orthodox; as a member of parliament, he voted with the ministry; as a political writer, he supported the principles of Mr. Burke in his "Reflections," and professed himself an enemy to every species of reform. Instead, therefore, of being fined, imprisoned, or outlawed, he was made a lord of trade, a profitable sinecure, and was a favourite of kings and their ministers all his life.

But it was otherwise with Thomas Paine, who was neither so profane as Tindal and Swift, nor so much of a skeptic as Hume and Collins. His Rights of Man rendered his Age of Reason unpardonable. Although the examples I have quoted, and the fact that all the other heterodox books continue to be publicly sold, sufficiently justify the belief, that if he had abjured his politics, and supported the divine right of kings, with the same clearness and ability he did those of the people, he might have enjoyed his unbelief unmolested either by church or state. As I observed before, I have no great regard to the memory of this person, although his early writings were serviceable to our cause in the time of the revolutionary war. All that he ever wrote in favour of freedom, is insufficient to atone for the indecent and arrogant manner in which he questions the authority of Holy Writ; nor can all the clearness of his reasonings in support of human liberty, counterbalance the injury he has inflicted upon it, by giving its enemies a plausible pretext for connecting the progress of

political freedom with the spreading of religious indifference, if not absolute unbelief.

You know me too well to suppose I had any other view in sketching this catalogue of English deistical and atheistical writers, than simply to establish the following truths—to wit: that there have been a great number of writers in England against religion, who, not only themselves and their works, have escaped and still escape condemnation, but who received the patronage and rewards of the government; and that, consequently, there is every reason to believe, that the persecution of Paine and his followers, as well as the prohibition to print or read his works, proceeds not from an abhorrence of his religious, but a fear of his political, principles.

In the present state of human intellect, the middling orders of people here, who see the works of those writers I have just enumerated publicly sold by the most orthodox booksellers, and publicly bought by the most orthodox people, (bishops and all,) naturally think they have a right to read these matters in books adapted to their taste and capacity. Like the grave-digger in Hamlet, they exclaim, "It is a shame, that great folks shall have countenance to drown or hang themselves, more than common christians." Accordingly, they claim the privilege of incurring the same risk as to the future, that their superiors so heedlessly encounter. The higher orders, on the contrary, seem to think that these books come under the class of luxuries, to which the other classes have no right to aspire. They are delicacies only calculated for the most refined palates, and must not be prostituted to the uses of the vulgar. While they do not hesitate to purchase and read the ribaldry of Rabelais and Swift, as well as the dangerous heresies of Collins and Hume, they prose-

cute the printers and purchasers of Paine, and sentence Mr. and Mrs. Carlile, Miss Mary Ann Carlile, and half a dozen more, to what, in fact, amounts to perpetual imprisonment, for selling a twopenny pamphlet. Of a king and ministry, a clergy and nobility and gentry, guilty of these inconsistencies, what can we say, except that they must be either the greatest hypocrites on earth, or the most disinterested of human beings, since they heedlessly subject themselves to a danger which they punish others for daring to encounter? They had better be consistent, however, like the great Mæcenas of Germany, who honestly confesses his motives, and has made abundance of regulations to prohibit the introduction of Voltaire, Hume, Gibbon, and various others, whose works have ever since been not only more plenty, but also more read, in the empire, than they were before.

This was just what might have been foreseen, by all persons gifted with the faculty of growing wise by experience. As an abstract proposition, nobody ever denied that persecution had any other effect, than to render opinion more obstinate in matters of religion.

“ For conscience is a thing, you know,
Like to a mastiff dog;
Which, if tied up, so fierce he'll grow,
He'll bite his very clog.”

And yet, no government of modern days but our own, ever acted upon this universal experience. On the contrary, they have ever proceeded upon the supposition, that they could do what no other had ever done before, and cemented by oppression what, if let alone, would very probably have in a few years crumbled to pieces.

LETTER XV.

London.

DEAR BROTHER,

MR. *****, who, in consequence of his extensive dealings with the United States, is sometimes partly civil to us Americans, amused me lately with an account of the anniversary dinner of the ***** Society, to which he is one of the subscribers, and which is honoured by having his Grace of York for its patron. The dinner was given at the Old London Tavern, where there is a capital cook, and the fare equal to any in the city. Indeed Mr. ***** seemed, as I thought, rather to countenance a suspicion, that if it were not for the bond of good fellowship and good eating at these places, most of these Societies would soon fall to the ground. The anniversary dinners are, he says, however, aided by the honour of an association with their Royal Highnesses, who patronise these Societies by always coming to the dinners, and by the particular care always taken to record their proceedings, as well as the presence of their Royal Highnesses, in the public papers. This dinner cost some three or four hundred guineas; and was so excellent, that, I am assured by Mr. ***** that the venison and iced Champagne so wrought upon several present, that

they actually subscribed nearly the amount of the price of a ticket to the charitable fund. He likewise hinted, that there are not a few of these subscription-people, who thus unite charity and economy with the gratification of their appetites, and under cover of the first, escape the imputation of gluttony and hard-drinking. By this you are not to understand any imputation on the ***** of ***** , Lord ***** , or either of the Royal Dukes, who are extremely liberal in their attendance on the anniversary dinners. Not one of these, Mr. ***** assured me, indulged in any indecorum of speech, or extravagance in drinking, on this occasion; but whether this proceeded from a habit of temperance, or an untoward accident, which took place shortly after the cloth was removed, must be left in doubt.

You will understand, my dear brother, that no mission can be sent to India; no poor people relieved, nor any poor children put to a charity school, unless there be a good dinner, and plenty of wine consumed, as a sort of modern christian libation to the goddess of charity. So universal is this practice of eating and drinking for the benefit of the souls of the Bramins, and the bodies of the English, that it is computed the consumption at these feasts would go a considerable way in relieving the poor of the nation. In no two places, I am told, do they keep up this classical mode of making libations more piously and charitably, than at the meetings of the ***** , and the Society for the suppression of vice and immorality, at which last they generally drink eighteen bumper toasts, to set a good example to tavern tipplers and the rising generation. In brief, nothing of this kind can be done without a good dinner, which is a *sine qua non* with the Royal Dukes and my Lord ***** , for which the latter is ra-

ther more tenacious than he was for the *sine qua non* at the treaty of Ghent. Not one of the Royal Dukes will patronise a Society that does not give a famous anniversary dinner, with plenty of iced Champagne.

So notorious, in fact, is the propensity to hard eating among the *better sort* here, that Mr. Accum the chymist, from the most benevolent motives, lately published a book on purpose to discourage this spirit of gluttony. In this he stated the mode in which every thing that goes into the mouth in London is adulterated and poisoned by the vendors. But all would not do; they eat as violently as ever, in spite of ratsbane and copperas, especially at the anniversary dinners.

The public papers, almost every day of the year, present to our notice advertisements similar to the following :

“ The Anniversary Dinner of the Seaman’s Hospital Society will be held at the London Tavern, on ———. Dinner on table at 5 o’clock.”

“ The Anniversary Dinner of the Asylum for Female Orphans is postponed to suit the convenience of His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge, President of the Institution.”

“ The Anniversary Dinner of the London Orphan Asylum will be held at the City of London Tavern, &c. His Royal Highness the Duke of York has very condescendingly promised to take the chair. Tickets one guinea.”

“ The Festival of the London Lying-in Hospital will be held at the City of London Tavern, on ———.”

"The Anniversary Dinner of the Society for the Suppression of Mendicity will be held at the Thatched House, &c.

"Patron: His Royal Highness the Duke of York.

"President: His Grace the Duke of Northumberland."

You are to understand, that these dinners are not given to the poor people belonging to these institutions, but to the directors, and not unfrequently out of the charitable fund. But the grand object is gained. His Grace of York, who is himself a pauper supported by public bounty, gets an excellent dinner, and is complimented for eating it; the stewards and directors get their names in the newspapers, and the whole affair redounds wonderfully to the credit of their charity! Oh, but say they, our example at least is beneficial. The example of the hypocrite can never inspire others with a sincere love of virtue. On the contrary, as hypocrisy is never consistent throughout, it is much more likely to injure the cause of virtue by the frequent display of vices irreconcilable with its own pretensions. Those, who give charity with one hand, and gripe the hard earnings of the poor with the other, will more probably do harm rather than good by their example.

"In conformity with this truly charitable custom, after the business had been gone through, that is to say, after nothing had been done and a vast deal said, we (I use the language of Mr. *****) sat down to one of the most enormous dinners I ever saw; the lord mayor's feast was nothing to it. Every body was delighted with the condescension of the duke, and the bishops sustained their ancient reputation for abstinence at dinner. His grace of ***** undertook to prove, that ignorance

was the source of all crimes, but was interrupted by a candidate for one of the livings in his grace's gift with, "your grace must except the crime of forgery." The joke occasioned a smile even from Sir ***** who is a very serious man, owing to the vast many murders he hath committed *secundum artem*—but the luckless wit, in the opinion of the company, had lost all chance for the living."

"Matters went on swimmingly, and all the children, including those of the duke of Clarence, "bastards and all," were in a fair way of being well educated, when the drinking of toasts began. The first was "the king," which was pronounced by the waiter, who acted as toast-master, with infinite devotion, and drank with still greater, especially by his grace of ***** and the bishops. This was of course a bumper toast. A little after the toast-master bawled out "the queen and the rest of the royal family," at which the whole company was struck dumb, and they all stared as if the hand-writing had been seen on the wall. "Treason" *looked* his royal highness, "radicalism" *looked* his grace of *****—while poor Sir ***** I think it was, jumped up and snatched the list of toasts out of the waiter's hands, who was now suspected of being at least one of the Cato-street conspirators. The toast was there at full length, but the author and the hand-writing remain unknown, even unto this day, although the constitutional society, aided by the Bridge-street association, are busily employed in ferretting out the traitor, who will certainly be hanged if caught. The poor waiter has been discharged, I understand, and two government spies set to watch his motions, so that if there be any virtue in perjury, I think he is in a fair way to the gallows.

"This unlucky incident of the toast spoiled one of the finest commencements to a pleasant drinking bout I ever saw ; it destroyed all harmony and confidence ; each man now looked on his next neighbour as a radical, and ***** , who drank the toast most loyally, were eyed with marks of jealousy and suspicion. The drinking now flagged, the company began to deal in forced laughs, and several excellent jokes had already fallen dead under the table, when his royal highness thought proper to retire, and was shortly followed by the rest of the company. Owing to this untoward accident, the guests all went home sober, a thing, I am told, that has not occurred at an anniversary dinner of a charitable society here, within the memory of man. What rendered this toast so much more awkward and ill-timed, was that it came in the very nick when the name of the duke of York was to have been given, and his royal highness had already cleared his throat, and adjusted himself for a speech in reply to the compliment, as is customary on such occasions. He was actually on his legs, when the name of the queen knocked him fairly down on his chair, from whence he rose no more until his final departure."

I should certainly not have mentioned this ludicrous incident, or given this ludicrous turn to the whole business, had I not ample reason for doubting the sincerity of the great leaders in these institutions for curing all the wants, healing all the sores, and reforming all the vices of mankind in England, by eating anniversary dinners. But I have seen and see enough every day to convince me, that these innumerable societies for bettering the condition of the poor, are, nine out of ten, the offspring of a great and general plan of the present monopolists of all the property and patronage of this kingdom, for bringing the common people into a state of abject dependence,

and thus depriving them, not only of the power, but the will, to assert their constitutional rights. In the ages of ecclesiastical tyranny, the people were reconciled to the monopoly of the church by distributions of alms from the monasteries, which converted them into idle and dissolute beggars ; and now, in the age of expiring antiquated abuses in government, the same means are resorted to in England to secure the monopoly of the church and nobility. The property of the country, if even tolerably distributed, would be amply sufficient to make the tenantry farmers instead of beggars ; but as this is at present quite out of the question, it is thought a good stroke of policy to reconcile them to their fate, by inviting them to poor-houses, or soup-houses, to eat the miserable pittance of charity. Thus these new and increasing charities are nothing more than links in the chain, by which the people are kept in a state of degrading dependence on the rich, and taught to be grateful to the benefactor, who takes pounds from the produce of the labouring peasant in tithes and rents, and gives them pennies in charity.

But when the actions of men are apparently good, their motives ought not to be impeached without sufficient grounds of justification. I will therefore proceed to state my reasons for doubting the purity of motives in the patrons, presidents, and vice-presidents innumerable, of these charitable institutions. If you will only look over the *Royal Calendar*, you will perceive that the king and princes of the royal family, one or the other of them, are the presidents or patrons of at least two-thirds of these institutions. Is there any thing in the characters of these persons to entitle them to such distinctions, or is it probable that the charity can be pure, that comes abroad under such polluted auspices ? These princes are either beggars or

bankrupts, or both—they are perpetually levying contributions on the nation, to supply the necessities created by their extravagance and debauchery; and it was but the other day, that one of them came begging to parliament for six thousand a year, which in a fit of pettishness he formerly rejected, because they would not make it thrice as much! These certainly are pretty patterns and patrons of charity, as they give away to paupers what they receive by beggary, and employ a small part of the wages of starving peasants and manufacturers, in relieving a small portion of the wants caused in some degree by their own extravagance. George the Third might have said of his sons, something as Pope Urban did of his nephews. “No king could ever boast of such extraordinary sons as I can. Frederick the bishop of Osnaburgh is another saint, and has always reformation in his mouth; but I cannot find that he ever performed any miracles. My son Clarence is an admiral, but never goes to sea. My son Cambridge is a field marshal, who never goes to war; and my son George is the most generous person in the world, only he never gives away any thing of his own.”

Charity, however, as it would seem, is no longer the modest, unobtrusive, blessed minister, who walked forth in secret and in silence, alone and in darkness, to solace the wants of deserving sufferers. She has become the tool and the strumpet of debauched princes, and flaunts abroad like maids of honour and court mistresses, only under the splendid sanction of royal patronage. She must be treated with anniversary dinners, complimentary toasts, and puffs innumerable in the newspapers and magazines—in short, she is become a mere political engine to enslave a whole people, by inuring them to habits of abject dependence, and making them fit only for what they will soon become.

I grant you, brother, that when I see the rich, the clergy, and the nobility liberally contributing to these societies, it seems little less than wicked to doubt their motives. Yet let me not be deterred from questioning motives and actions, directly tending to corrupt and debase mankind. Half the evils of this world are produced by the abuse or misapplication of a good thing to a bad purpose. The delicacy which shrinks from detecting hypocrisy in whatever garb, whether of charity or religion, is treason to mankind.

It is a fact which nobody, except Mr. Vansittart, can or will deny, that a great portion of the present distress, in this country, arises from taxation, rents, and tithes combined. What then should be the great object of those who were really animated with a pure and disinterested passion for the good of their fellow-countrymen? Certainly to diminish as far as possible these burthens—to adapt the amount of rents and tithes to the present depressed state of agriculture and manufactures. They would, at least such is my humble opinion of philanthropy, large, comprehensive, practical and efficient—they would, in their capacity of legislators, resist, on all occasions, every attempt to lay any additional burthens on the people—they would use every effort within the limits of rational economy, to diminish the expenditures of government; and, if clergy or landholders, gradually relinquish a portion of tithes, and lower the rents of their poor tenants, already bowed to the earth by taxes, that eat the coats from their backs and the food from their tables.

Have these amateurs of charity and philanthropy done this? Did Lord Gambier, Mr. Wilberforce, or the archbishop of Canterbury, ever vote against a tax, or raise his voice against that wretched system of boundless extravagance,

which has ruined this noble Isle? O yes, brother, they voted for a repeal of the income-tax, which was, in a great measure, a tax upon the rich—it fell not upon those, who, having no incomes, pay all, or nearly all, by the labour of their hands and the sweat of their brows. Did these royal presidents, or patrons, ever repress a single extravagance for which the people paid, or curb a single vice, by which the people were corrupted, for the benefit of the poor and needy? Did the king ever deny to himself the frivolous gratification of wasting thousands upon Chinese temples, architectural trumpery, and gilded frippery? Did he ever command his ministers to spare his people, or sacrifice a guinea in his expenditures to the altar of the public good, to the furtherance of the nation's happiness? The answer is in the millions wasted in shows—in pampering idle drones of office—in diversions equally expensive to the people, and frivolous in the monarch—and in reviving old, exploded absurdities and blasphemies, for the purpose of gratifying an insatiable passion for show and mummery. When I see persons, like these princes, giving a few hundreds of the people's hard earnings, for, it must be remembered, they have nothing of their own, for the honour of being presidents and patrons of charitable institutions, I cannot bring myself to dignify their motives, or their actions, by any other names than vain glory and hypocrisy.

When I come to the receivers of rents and tithes, whose names appear so conspicuous at public meetings and public subscriptions, I do not find them taking the only means of restoring the happiness and independence of the people, by the decisive step of relinquishing a portion of their tithes; voluntarily diminishing the rents paid by their tenants, or putting down taxation by their vote in

parliament. This would infuse new life and spirit into the body politic, and a thousand pounds, given in this manner, would be worth a hundred thousand bestowed in charity. The first would not degrade the peasant with the weight of charity, or the imputation of pauperism. It would be a sacrifice to time and circumstance ; and though it might challenge the gratitude of the receiver, it would be in such a way, as not to create those ideas of abject dependence, which corrupt and debase our nature. But this project will never take extensively, unless forced upon them by the actual inability to pay ; because, in the first place, it is not calculated to gain the eclat which follows charitable donations, and, in the second, it would be a great step towards restoring the people of the country to some degree of their former independence. This would not suit the adepts in political charity, who know full well, that in the present state of the country, there is no other alternative, than absolute depression and dependence, and absolute revolution in the system of government. They will, therefore, continue to prefer the old way of squeezing a great deal out of the people with one hand, and giving them a little with the other, that they may squeeze them again ; like the familiars of the inquisition, who, when the unfortunate victim is at his last gasp, charitably administer a cordial to enable him to endure new tortures. There are, however, some honourable exceptions, which deserve to be mentioned ; but they are not from among the presidents and patrons of charitable societies. Earl Fitzwilliam lately returned, I think, fifteen per cent. of his quarters' rents to his tenants, after receiving them ; and Lord George Cavendish gave his a dinner, and returned them twenty per cent. after it was over. *Cavendo Tutus*, Lord George ; it is better

to give a little than lose the whole. This is something like the thing; but yet it is not *quite* the thing. It is still too much like charity; it is giving as charity what ought to be claimed as a right. This twenty per cent. ought to have been relinquished for the year, and that, before it was paid. Then it would have been a mere favour; now it is a gift. I have not heard that any of the rich prelates of the established church have imitated these examples. When I do, I shall not fail to apprise you of this remarkable event.

With respect to those numerous charitable schools established of late years, they are, for the most part, intended for little else than mere means of strengthening particular sects, by bringing up the children, educated by them, in the tenets of the church, under whose patronage the school happens to be placed. Thus the church of England has its schools supported by what by courtesy is called charity, but at which no child is admitted, whose parents will not consent to its being educated in the tenets and forms of this particular church. This is also the case with the dissenters, the methodists, and every other denomination, whose different charity schools are exclusively devoted to the education of religious proselytes, and, for the most part, beyond doubt, originated in the spirit of jealousy, rivalry, and esprit du corps. Within a few years past more than one plan of national education has been defeated by the jealousy of the established church, which saw, or fancied it saw, in them, the seeds of danger to its predominating influence; and it is now well understood, that Mr. Brougham has abandoned his great scheme for rendering education general in this country by national patronage, through the opposition of the dissenters, who, it seems, with all their horror of ignorance, had rather the people should remain ig-

norant, than give to the established church, and the government which is incorporated with it, the means of making proselytes through the medium of national schools. Thus you see, brother, what is really the honest truth, that charity here, as elsewhere, often covers a multitude of sins, and takes care to look sharp through religious spectacles, before she will contribute a penny. In one of my late excursions, I happened at a small town in the diocess of *****, where bigotry reigns in very considerable perfection, and the church of England is propped up by more than a usual quantity of privilege and prerogative. I found the place divided into parties, on the score of a little heretical dissenter about nine years old, who had unwittingly been admitted into an episcopal school, and expelled again, because his father would neither subscribe to the thirty-nine articles, nor allow his son to be educated in any other faith than his own. Parties ran high; some blamed the church, some the parent, and some the little boy, who, as the dissenters in his neighbourhood were not sufficiently rich and numerous to establish a charity school of their own in that town, was in danger of growing up in utter ignorance of every thing but bigotry; when a rich dissenter of the neighbourhood, hearing of the circumstance, took compassion on him, and undertook his education out of pure spite.

How different is this from OUR DEAR LITTLE NEW-ENGLAND; of which every man who drew his first breath there, feels the prouder, the more he sees of the rest of the world. There education is the general property of the whole people; and the poorest child of the poorest man that breathes *our* air, receives his education without feeling it as a degradation, because he has paid his little portion for this purpose to the state, and is as

much entitled to the benefits of the establishment as the richest person in the country. Neither parent nor child is obliged to profess or abjure any particular creed, or to belie their consciences under the penalty of living in utter ignorance; nor does the meanest urchin ever feel the degrading consciousness, that he is beholden to the charity of strangers for the nurture of his mind. Well may our New-England people boast of this distinction; which is peculiar to themselves, and long may they resist any and every attempt to prop up a particular church, or strengthen a particular sect or party by the establishment of charity schools, where the test of admission is a religious creed, and its consequences but too often a confirmed and base-born habit of perpetual dependence on charity, for what every one ought to rest upon his own exertions to supply.

From what I have stated, I trust you will not think me either prejudiced or uncharitable, if I doubt the motives of these bloated profligates of the royal line, who ostentatiously bestow a small part of what they wring from the people, or of the pampered luxurious lords, spiritual and temporal, who head subscription lists for the benefit of idle paupers or worthless hypocrites, while racking their tenants or their parishioners with rents and tithes to support their vaunted benefactions. This country plumes itself upon its superiority over all others in charities, and urges its pretensions with an arrogance that cannot fail of provoking a scrutiny into the motives for these boasted establishments. Those who make the greatest claims upon our admiration, must expect to be tried by motives as well as actions; and people, who are ever boasting of their virtues, will certainly, sooner or later, be convicted of hypocrisy. I cannot easily

bring my mind to comprehend the purity of that, charity, which racks the industrious out of pounds, and gives away pennies to the idle and thriftless. I cannot believe in that benevolence or generosity, which gives a trifle in alms, for the purpose of reconciling the people to its insatiable monopoly of all the rest. In short, when I see hardened profligates, who live in the daily violation of social and moral duties ; inexorable landlords, who are every day distressing their tenants for rent ; and inflexible bishops, who will not forego a little of their tithes, contributing at public meetings to societies for propagating morality and religion, and relieving distress, it is impossible to help taking it for granted, that the first seek to cover their debaucheries, the latter their extortions, under the sacred mantles of piety and benevolence.

LETTER XVI.

London.

DEAR BROTHER,

You know the theatre was ever one of my favourite amusements, and I dare say have not forgot when you and I took French leave from ***** to go and see Cooper the first time he came to Boston. To this day, in defiance of bigotry and fanaticism, which have attempted to throw a stain on this species of amusement, I am not ashamed to confess, that a good play, well performed, is to me the highest of all treats ; nor can I conceive of

a more pure and refined intellectual enjoyment. A good taste in the relish for dramatic exhibitions, is, beyond doubt, one great criterion of the state of morals; and wherever I see the stage converted into a bear-garden for drunkards, wild beasts, puppet-shows, and pantomimes, I take it for granted the audience must be pretty much on a par with the exhibition. Above all, when people, called well educated and polite, are fond of seeing murders, madmen, and extravagant caricatures of every human passion represented on the stage, it is a sure sign their taste approximates to that of the mob, who are most outrageously addicted to running after executions and funerals.

I used to go often to the theatres here, until I grew tired of their abominations. The dramatic art is certainly at the lowest ebb in this country, owing to a variety of causes. The first is the indifference of the fashionable world, who, one and all, prefer to go to sleep at the Italian opera, to sitting out one of Shakspeare's best plays: the second cause, I apprehend to be the bigotry of a considerable portion of that class, which furnished a vast many spectators to the theatres. I mean the respectable middling class, many of whom will not go to the play because they are told it is immoral; and many for no other reason, than because it is no longer fashionable. It actually smacks of radicalism to go often to the theatre.

For these, and other reasons of less extensive operation, it happens, that except when a new well bepuffed actor; a well bepuffed play. by some well bepuffed author; the king, the queen, the elephant, or some other monster attracts them, the theatres are but little visited by fashionable people. The drama is no longer a fashionable topic of conversation; and the man who ventured to introduce the name of Shakspeare into the best society, would,

beyond doubt, be voted a great bore by the Corinthians and the young ladies of ton. The theatres are consequently in possession of the vulgar, who can relish nothing but spectacles or broad caricatures; country gentry that come to town, and are taken thither by their fashionable friends, because it is a sort of out of the way place, where their awkwardness and old-fashioned dresses cannot disgrace them; and strangers driven thither by the desperate fiend, Ennui, which is a native of London, though baptized in French, and hovers night and day over this cave of spleen. These last, whatever they may think or say on the subject, can have little or no influence in correcting the taste of the town.

The result is as might be expected. The taste of the mob must be consulted, as by the mob the theatres are principally supported. Every species of monster, moral and intellectual, two-legged and four-legged, riots on the stage. Horses, dogs, cosacks, elephants, camels, and dromedaries are the heroes of the drama, so that I have often been tempted to cry out with the excellent mayor of Quinborough,

“Give me a play without a beast, I charge you.”

These exhibitions of quadrupeds take precedence over all others, and command the most outrageous plaudits of the discriminating audience. The next in public attention is the melo-drame, where the passions are expressed by the fiddlers, and the author is saved the trouble of attending to such low matters. All he has to do is to produce striking situations, at all hazards, at every risk of probability, and in defiance of common sense. After these comes the legitimate comedy, as the excellent critics call it, which owes all its effect to a drunken Irishman or sailor, two or three non-descript and

original monsters not to be found on the earth, nor in the waters under the earth ; a smart hero, compounded of the opposite extremes of harem-scarem imprudence and profound sentiment, together with a sentimental young lady, always ready to make a fool of her parents. The dialogue must consist in cant phrases, gross slang, offensive double-entendre, and inflated sentiment on the part of the young lady—as also her lover, whenever he has time to be in love. A fourth class of plays, very much approved of by John Bull at present, are those not absolutely written by any body. They consist of the united labours of the scene painters, the mechanics, the scene-shifters, and the “Great Unknown,” whose works are regularly dramatised by an industrious journeyman playwright, called Nathaniel T****. They are made up of all the most striking incidents of the novel or poem, crowded as thick as hops, and jumbled together pretty much at random. The whole machinery of these farra-goes is held together by the fiddlers, who, whenever the playwright is at his wit’s ends, or on the verge of absurdity or impossibility, flourish their bows, and thunder away in the very nick of time, while the lucky wight escapes under their cover to the next incongruity. The audience, which in London always goes to sleep while the music is playing, forgets what came last, and the next scene commences with all the advantages of an utter oblivion of the past. The nice taste of the mob is thus perfectly satisfied, in witnessing a quick succession of striking incidents, without the necessity of those fatiguing efforts to make them appear probable, that have thrown such obstacles in the way of many dramatic authors. The most illustrious of these domestic manufacturers of second hand trumpery is Mr. Nathaniel T**** aforesaid, whom the “Great Unknown” calls “my friend Mr. T****,”

a proof, in my opinion, that Sir Walter Scott, the aforesaid unknown, is a very good-natured knight, or he would not call a man his friend who had committed so many assassinations upon his Muse. Saving this gentleman, I know of no other distinguished comic writers here at present. There are several that write excellent farces in five acts, however, which please the public taste just as well, and better, than a Sheridan or a Moliere.

Tragedy, who has certainly more lives than a cat, and has been daggered and ratsbaned at least a dozen times within twenty years past, has lately, it is said, revived here with great splendour. A Mr. Walker has written the tragedy of Wallace; Mr. Shiels, that of Damon and Pythias; Mr. Haynes that of the Bridal Night; and Lord Byron, as distant rumour states rather obscurely, *four* new ones, only one of which is yet before the public. That I presume you have read, as I perceive it has been republished in the United States. Of the other three I know nothing, except what has leaked out from persons lately arrived from Italy. One, it is hinted, is antediluvian, another Asiatic, and the third Italian. His lordship, in addition to these, has, it is said, written his own life, besides a poem, called, I know not what, for it is only rumour as yet. He has, I should think, rather too many irons in the fire, to do any one of these jobs as it ought to be done; and I fear is frittering away his genius, by lending it alternately, or, as it would seem, at one and the same time, to the most lofty and the most frivolous objects. It is stated that he intends to give his biography to "the first lyric poet of the age," who has already sold it to Mr. John Murray for two thousand guineas. Whether this "first lyric poet of the age," be Mr. Southey, Mr. Wordsworth, or Mr. Thomas Moore, I cannot affirm; for each of these has his respective admirers,

ay, and critics too, who will not give up a hair's breadth of their opinions. With respect to the two thousand guineas, I do not believe in one quarter of it; for it is one of the secrets of the excellent art of puffing here, to circulate accounts of the enormous sums paid by booksellers for their copyrights. The enlightened public, which always applies the Hudibrastic criterion, and estimates the value of a thing at what it will bring, will run after a two thousand guinea book, when they would run away from one of ten pounds. The admirers of genius here have never purchased a copy of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, since they found out he was a republican, and sold his poem for twelve or twenty pounds.

Another of the accoucheurs, who assisted at the late new birth of Tragedy, is a Mr. Proctor, who is, however, known to the Muses by the name of Barry Cornwall. For some unknown cause, he is a great favourite of the *Edinburgh Review*, which has for some time past been preparing the way for giving him a *run* upon the town. He first published some smaller pieces of poetry, which were praised by the reviewer. He then felt the public pulse with some fragments of a tragedy, which were also praised by the reviewer. Then, after a vast deal of preliminary puffing, and appeals to public curiosity, the new tragedy of Mr. Barry Cornwall, which was to establish a new era of the drama, was acted before the discriminating mob, which constitutes a London audience. The literary gazette, and a few other *half-crown* critics, attempted to maintain its reputation. But it did not obtain a run, as was expected. It is by no means equal to our countryman Payne's tragedy of *Brutus*, which is quite as original as *Mirandola*, and, in the opinion of the best judges here, much su-

perior to any tragedy brought out within several years past.

Mr. Barry Cornwall professes to have imitated the old dramatists of the age of Elizabeth and James--Ben Jonson, Ford, and others of that school. He, however, claims the character of the Duke of Mirandola as his own creation. I always think it is a bad sign, when a writer sets out with imitation, because it destroys all hope of his giving to his work the greatest of all charms, that of originality. If he succeed in his copy, it is but a copy after all, a mere second-hand piece; and if he fail, his defeat is only the more degrading. That Mr. Cornwall has failed, appears, beyond doubt, in a comparison with the originals to which he refers. In attempting that easy, careless simplicity, by which this extraordinary school of writers reached every thing they desired, and reached it by the shortest cut, he has sunk into feebleness, languor, and mawkish simplicity; or rather, mawkishness without simplicity. He has neither the arch and exquisite playfulness and waggery, nor the almost equally exquisite pathos of some of these old scenes, which, however debased by neighbouring vulgarity and profligacy, are, notwithstanding, so pure, so fresh, and so delicious. Still less can he lay claim to that *natural force*, for I can find no other name for it, by which these writers, as it were without study or effort, struck out such lucky beauties, and, while seemingly unaware of their triumph, reached the highest trophies of their art. One of the personifications in Mr. Cornwall's play is, however, characteristic of the prodigious. It is a personification of the sea, and, as might be expected, not only "very like a whale," but very like a very great whale. I cannot agree with him in his opinion, that the character of the Duke of Mirandola is original. Not only the hint of the play it-

self, but more especially the Duke's situation and character are, I think, borrowed from Shirley's Andromena.

But the most popular of all those inspired writers, who have lately assisted at the resurrection of tragedy, is Mr. Maturin, an Irish clergyman, who is, in the region of fiction, what Counselor Phillips is in that of law. There is certainly some of the smoke of genius in this writer, and where there is smoke, they say, there must be fire. But it seems to be a sort of clumsy, unpurposed, and indiscriminate faculty, engendered in horrors, and nestled in the same cradle with the great "raw head and bloody bones" of the nursery. It seems always labouring with some mighty god-head, and yet produces nothing but shapeless monsters. Devoted to a mere accumulation of horror upon horror, extravagance upon extravagance, his efforts seem those of the cyclops, Polyphemus, the result of energy and blindness combined. His genius appears, in fact, entirely devoted to the salutary purpose of exciting a people, like the citizens of London, the genteeler portion of whom are so used to boxing-matches, and the lower classes to executions, that their blunted sympathies can only be awakened on the stage by the most disgusting exhibitions of extravagant horrors.

For my part, to my shame be it spoken, I have no relish for this sort of genius, if genius it must be called. I believe the perfection of a work of genius to consist in the symmetry and harmony of its parts, the purity of the design, the chastity of its embellishments, and the nice judgment with which the whole is put together. Any man can build a shapeless Babel, and any dreamer can picture a shapeless, disproportioned monster, or put together a mass of incongruities. But the Grecian pile is the work of a master, and the Grecian

statue is the result of the perfect harmony of the human faculties. Mr. Maturin always has his pockets full of daggers and ratsbane; and not content, like *Bob Acres*, with killing a man a week, murders away in every page like a perfect Jack Ketch in tragedy. Then his characters are always insuperably melancholy or ineffably mad, without ever, on any occasion, either thinking, feeling, or expressing themselves like the people who inhabit this humble earth. I should take it that he had made an excursion to the planet Mercury, or some other in the near neighbourhood of the sun, and there studied nature sublimated to "hissing hot," at the same time that his brain became heated to the salamander temperament. We have convulsions; murders by dagger and poison; ravings; writhings; gnashings of teeth; and extremes of all kinds, which are the mere ordinary, every-day amusements of his characters; and from beginning to end, not one of them is sufficiently cool to act like a person in his sober senses for half a minute together. It is quite impossible to sleep at a play of this sort, and that is the secret probably of such productions being so well received here. But besides this, there is undoubtedly a great sympathy of taste and character between the tragic writers of the Germans, whom Mr. Maturin seems to have followed, and a London audience. Some droll writer professes to have written his book with a fiddlestick in one hand, and enjoins all his readers, if they wish to enjoy it, to equip themselves in the same manner, before they can enter into the spirit of his work. According to this rule, of reading a book in the spirit with which it is written, nothing can be more natural, than that a species of tragedy, like this of Mr. Maturin, invented by a dozing student over a pipe and pot of beer, within the thick walls of a

German university, should be hugely relished by a London audience, to whom a pot of porter is the fountain of all inspiration ; a pipe the altar of smoking incense ; and a beer-barrel the throne of Bacchus.

But it would appear, my dear brother, that these blustering, poisoning, daggering, and ratsbaning tragedies are not only eminently fitted for the audience, but actually seem manufactured on purpose for the actors who are to perform them. These last are eternally in a fever or a fidget, just like the author. Their muscles are always in a busy convulsive motion, and their eyes, as it were, starting out of their heads, like the honest captain in Italy, who got what he called "a d——d painted snowball in his mouth." They rage, roar, grin, and skip about like so many mad harlequins ; and it is worth a great deal to see one of them fight a battle and die on the stage. The English, with all their humanity, you know are fond of boxing-matches, cock-fighting, and bull-baiting, except when they see these things abroad, when their tourists always write down the people brutes, or something equally complimentary. Nothing, therefore, except the wild beasts, delights them half so much at the play, as seeing Richard and Richmond, Macbeth and Macduff, Hotspur and Harry, fight like bull-dogs or bruisers. They appear to enjoy every imaginary thrust, pretty much in the spirit of an Indian banqueting upon the tortures of a prisoner at the stake ; and they would never forgive an actor, if he suffered himself to be killed like a christian man, by the first thrust through the body. But the dying is the triumph of the art, and occasions equal satisfaction with an execution at Tyburn. The hero must not be less than a quarter of an hour about it. He must roll and tumble about the stage, like one in a fit of the

colic, and at the last pang give himself a flip-flap like a flounder, and fall flat on his back, as stiff as buckram. If he don't die in this way, John Bull will set about demolishing the play-house directly.

I have seen the critics convulsed with ecstasy, and the whole house in a roar of delight, at a death-scene of Roscius Kean. On receiving his first wound, he doubled himself up like a tobacco-worm, and announced the accident with a broad grin. But he fell to again with most resolute courage. Anon he received another poke, which caused him to stagger and fall upon one knee, where he delighted the audience with various displays of determined valour, grinning terribly all the while. On receiving the third push, he wheeled round, staggered, stamped, and fenced with the air like a blind game cock, until finally he received a *coup de grace*, which caused him to jump up two yards, and fall down in the most affecting manner. Now, heaven be praised! thought I, the man is dead at last. But I was out in my reckoning, for then began the cream of the affair: the rollings, the contortions, the gnashings of teeth, the bitings of the dust, the gropings about for the sword, and, finally, the great flip-flap which crowns all. I swear to you, brother, one of these first-rate actors is as hard to kill as our Missouri bears, which, it is said, are so tenacious of life, that a bullet or two through the vitals is a mere flea-bite. Now if the result of this terrible battle were not perfectly well known to every one of the audience beforehand, at least to a great majority of them, one might suppose, that the intense interest it excited was simply the effect of a high state of suspense and anxiety to see which of the combatants would be victorious. But they all know perfectly well, that Macduff will kill Mac-

beth ; and Richmond, Richard ; so that it can only originate in that innate love of bloodshed, which is gratified even with a mere sham battle and fictitious death.

This same Mr. Edmund Kean, who is the father of this gigantic mode of giving up the ghost, every night puzzles the critics exceedingly to know whether he be really a Roscius or a buffoon. The town is grievously divided as to his merits ; and the two factions, by keeping up public excitement, are of great service to his reputation. I have seen him several times, and am inclined to think him a caricaturist and a buffoon, ninety-nine times in a hundred ; but the hundreth time he is capital. Independently of this extravagance of energy and action, which is absolutely necessary to awaken the blunted sympathies of a London audience, I think Mr. Kean's great excellence consists in giving what may be called, a fictitious consequence to many passages in Shakspeare, and other hacknied authors, which neither they nor the audience ever dreamed of admiring before. Almost all, and, in fact, I may say all the fine passages in Shakspeare are perfectly familiar to the attendants at English and American theatres. They have seen these beauties displayed in their fullest effect by Mrs. Siddons, Mrs. Merry, Kemble, Cooke, and Cooper, until they can anticipate the very tone and action that will be used in every line, and become almost insensible to their excellence by the frequency of repetition. Mr. Kean, aware of this, instead of wasting his powers in the old beaten path, reserves himself to astonish the audience, and confound their understandings, by giving wonderful force to insignificant passages, that have hitherto been entirely neglected, on the score of their want of any kind of merit. This is novelty at least ; and by an audience, which has

little or no perception of real excellence, new absurdity is preferred to old perfection.

This idea, of dwelling with the greatest emphasis on the most insignificant passages, is not however original. It is beyond doubt borrowed from the Italian Opera here, where one of the intolerable Squallini will expend all her powers of voice and expression upon "and" or "but," or some other word without meaning, to the inexpressible delight of the London cognoscenti, who go there to exhibit their grand costume. This habit of Mr. Kean is called striking out new beauties in an author, and certainly the author ought to be very much obliged to him; for the real beauties of a play will always take care of themselves, you know. It is only the weak parts, that, like rickety children, require a deal of cockering, to enable them to hold up their heads. On the whole, in my opinion, since the days of Cooke and Kemble, there has been no actor equal to *our* Cooper in real legitimate tragedy. Mr. Kean, and his imitators, have degraded the tragic Muse into a busy fidgeting termagant, and, by their mode of treating the deeper passions of the mind, have taken away all dignity from distress, and rendered even calamity ridiculous. This skipping, shirt-tearing Roscius, Mr. Kean, has lately sailed for the United States, whither he has been tempted by large sums, and the expectation of conquering a new world, in spite of the yellow fever, which is a perfect bug-bear to John Bull. If I might turn prophetic on this great occasion, I would *guess* that our people will first make fools of themselves, and then quarrel with him for treating them as fools. Peacocks are vain; and belles and coxcombs are vain; but the vainest of all living things is a spoiled London actor, whose head has been turned upside down by the plaudits of an audience of fashionable women. That capricious insolence, too often the consequence of public applause,

is heightened in these people by the enormous premiums given to them for coming among you. They consider, and with some justice, that a people, who pay so liberally for second-rate excellence in Mr. Phillips's singing, and Mr. Kean's acting, must necessarily have more money than wit, and are apt to treat them accordingly. Should Mr. Kean go to *****, as I think he probably will, I hope you will go to town and see him, that I may know whether your opinion coincides with mine. I earnestly hope my worthy brethren will not debase themselves by worshipping the idol, nor give any further occasion for the saucy "Southrons" to taunt them with the old story of British influence. I fear they will, remembering as I do, even against my will, how they petted and feasted that puppy of an English attaché, who treated our rosy and lovely girls like so many milkmaids.

Comic acting, like Comedy herself, is on a scale still inferior to that of tragic acting. The real fine gentleman is no more, either in real life here, or in the comedies or comedians of the present time, unless Mr. Elliston may be called an exception. In the room of those sprightly wits and courageous coxcombs, who give such charms to the elder plays, we now see a miserable specimen of a modern Corinthian, stupid as the author himself, and depending entirely for endurance on the size of his neckcloth, the enormity of his costume, and a few cant phrases, equally destitute of meaning and wit. The rest depends upon the actor, who is obliged to animate the skeleton, by every exertion of the powers of grimace and buffoonery. The broad vulgarity, mixed up with incongruous and exaggerated feeling, as its contrast, by which the comedy of the present day is characterised, is equally at war with genteel humour and sprightliness, as well as natural, unaffected sentiment. It is the exertion of an

exhausted genius, fostered by a worn-out taste. The actors must of course accommodate themselves to the poverty of the age, and bring their powers down to the dead level of dramatic degradation. Besides, they have no heart to exert themselves, after seeing a Newfoundland dog, or an elephant, greeted with applauses on the stage, that in a better age would have only fallen to the lot of a Garrick, a Betterton, a Cibber, and an Abingdon.

It is impossible to compare the French stage with the English at this period, without being forcibly struck with the entire superiority of the *Theatre Française*, which is devoted to the preservation of the national taste, over either of the London theatres. At the former, I always found an audience, refined, decorous, quiet, and attentive. Every noise was promptly repressed by the sentiment of the house, and every indecorum immediately arrested by a burst of indignant feeling, which the most hardy insolence or determined profligacy cannot withstand. The costume of the actors, while accommodated, in the most scrupulous manner, to the age and people to which the characters appertained, was totally divested of all tinsel and glitter. The scenery and decorations were always in the most chaste and appropriate style; nor did I ever see an instance of the Birmingham brilliancy, with which Mr. Kean sometimes dazzles a London audience. The taste of the vulgar is never appealed to at the *Theatre Française*, by exhibitions of wild beasts; nor are the menageries emptied of their four-footed tenants, for the purpose of giving a zest to an intellectual banquet. There is no puffing in newspapers and-play bills, nor is the public ever assured by an anonymous friend that the spectacle will be entirely superb. The audience judges for itself, and the decision is seldom if ever reversed, because it consists of the most enlightened people

of the capital. In short, there is a total absence, a studied rejection, of all those impudent quackeries, and unblushing impostures, to which the theatres here continually resort to inveigle the mob into their toils. Nothing but the legitimate drama is admitted on the stage of the *Theatre Française*; nor would it be possible for the taste of the polite audience to be brought to endure the profanations nightly exhibited on the London boards. If, as has been a thousand times asserted, the stage is the criterion of public morals and taste, no one can hesitate a moment in acknowledging, that the people of Paris are far more polite, decent, refined, moral, and intellectual, than those of this emporium of vulgarity and vice. For my part, I earnestly wish our countrymen would grow into a habit of depending more upon their own taste in a thousand particulars. Crude and unformed as it may be in some degree, it partakes largely of the vigour of youth, and is capable of improvement by domestic cultivation. It is neither worn out nor corrupted, except by the bad examples imported from abroad; nor is it, like the present taste of this capital, supported merely by the bloated, dropsical legs of luxury and extravagance, unaccompanied by any superiority, either in elegance of manners or refinement of mind. If we must have models, let us go back to a better age of England, and drink at the fountain head, rather than quaff of the mere froth and sediment, which marks the final absorption or evaporation of the waters.

LETTER XVII.

London.

DEAR BROTHER,

WHEN I have nothing else to attract my attention, which is pretty often the case in this very dull city, I amuse myself with attending the debates in parliament, that are sometimes interesting from the subjects under discussion. In this way I have had an opportunity of hearing the ablest speakers, on topics that afforded the best opportunities for the display of their talents. On a late occasion, in a question connected with African slavery, (a fruitful subject for declamation,) Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. Brougham, Sir James Mackintosh, Lord Londonderry, and several others, made their best figure. Each in turn complained of the encouragement given to the slave trade by many of the European powers, in possession of colonies in the West Indies, and at the same time reluctantly acknowledged, that our abandoned Republic was the only government that heartily and in good earnest co-operated with them in their efforts to prevent it.

I should have been quite delighted with this testimony in favour of our country, had not all these distinguished persons contrived, as usual, to turn the compliment to their own account, by ascribing our good behaviour to the influence of their own

precept and example. Besides, we were of the same stock, which circumstance was, in itself, quite sufficient to account for any little glimmerings of virtue or humanity observed amidst the corruptions of liberty. I was not a little annoyed, and at the same time amused, at hearing Mr. Wilberforce, who really has the most crying face, with the most evangelical gravity, indulging this inveterate John Bull propensity of taking to himself all the credit of other people's exertions. The struggle was mighty between his natural candour, which evidently prompted him to declare the truth that *we* set them the first example of humanity to the blacks, and that lurking vanity, which incited him to take all the credit to himself. The latter seemed to prevail; for, would you believe it? nothing was said that would have induced a spectator, ignorant of the real fact, to believe we deserved any credit in this business of abolishing the slave trade, except that of following their example! But at the same time that they bore this reluctant testimony to our honest and vigorous co-operation in this affair, there was yet one thing wanting to complete the climax. Our government had, it seems, firmly resisted every attempt to establish the right of search, that practice which Great Britain has most reluctantly relinquished, and which she made an effort to resume under this convenient cover of humanity. I think it highly probable another overture will be made on this subject, if it be for no other purpose than to afford another pretext for a little more cant on the part of Mr. Wilberforce, and a little more hypocritical regret on the part of my Lord Londonderry.

If this overture should be made, I have no doubt but that our government will again promptly and decisively decline it. Under whatever pretext it

may come, it is nothing less than an insidious attempt to revive the old right of search, and to establish a maritime practice, under cover of which her vessels of war may again embarrass our merchantmen by vexatious delays, and throw the most serious obstacles in the way of our just and authorized commerce. In my opinion, a nation ceases to be independent, when, under any pretext whatever, she authorizes any other power to interfere in the enforcement of her own laws by sea or land. This proposed reciprocal acknowledgment of the right of search is, beyond doubt, an attempt to establish it upon the basis of a prescriptive and acknowledged right, and is part of a deep-laid plan for indirectly reviving the old pretension to the empire of the seas, under the mask of humanity, pretty much as this government is attempting to extend its empire in India, Ceylon, and Madagascar, under the mask of religion.

Our wise and temperate cabinet at Washington is too polite to tell my Lord Londonderry so ; but it cannot but be aware, that this new-born zeal for African freedom originated, or, rather, finally triumphed, in parliament at a most suspicious moment. It was just at the dawning of a peace after a long war, in which the trade of France was entirely cut up, and her West-India colonies were in great want of the necessary hands to cultivate their great staple of sugar. The British West Indies, on the contrary, were amply supplied with slaves, and there were millions of Indians in Hindostan, capital substitutes for Africans. By preventing those European nations who hold American or West-India possessions from obtaining a supply of slaves, the English would be enabled, by underselling them, to monopolize the sugar trade, and at the same time get great credit for their humanity. Trade is, in fact, an object of which this

government never loses sight for a moment. The interests of trade are a sufficient justification for a violation of national faith and national justice. Religion, morality, and all things else, are in turn subservient to this grasping principle. They go to war for the trade of an island in the West Indies; and when two nations are engaged in hostilities, the question of co-operating with either is always a question of interest, rather than principle. That the government has not long since interfered to repress the struggles of freedom in South America, as it has done every where else, is entirely owing to this trading conscience, which governs it on all occasions. The legitimate government of Spain prohibited all commercial intercourse with her colonies; while the establishment of the colonial independence will open the ports of South America. The present temporary revival of trade and manufactures here, is almost exclusively owing to immense shipments to the new republics; and, at this moment, there are upwards of sixty ships, with nearly eight millions sterling of goods, waiting the fall of Lima. It will be a losing business to the shippers, but it will assist Mr. Vansittart in his budget.—A second affair of Buenos Ayres, which deceived the adventurers. What a fortunate concurrence of circumstances was it then, when they could at the same time monopolize the sugar trade, and get credit for their humanity!

Humanity, when in its pure state, and uncontaminated by any mixture of interest or passion, is a widely extended and comprehensive feeling. It comprehends not merely one colour, one nation, and one quarter of the globe, but the whole human race in a greater or less degree. To oppress one people, and at the same time affect great commiseration for another, is not humanity, but hypo-

crisy. It is assuming a cloak for some interested purpose; either to impose upon the credulity of the world for objects of gain or ambition, or to prop up a falling reputation. If this government were really and sincerely actuated by a principle of humanity, not altogether confined to the colour of the epidermis, why has it lately permitted the Mussulmen to exercise the most cruel outrages on the Greeks; to carry on a war of extermination against Christians, who believe in the same Saviour as the people of England? Why did not Lord Strangford, the English ambassador at the Porte, while dining with the Grand Seignior, an honour never before conferred on a christian dog, and basking in the sunshine of Ottoman favour—why did he not take the opportunity to interfere to prevent the indiscriminate massacre of christians, men, women, and children? Why?—because he enjoyed this very favour at the price of giving them up to the butcher—at the price of refusing admission on board the English vessels in the Archipelago, to those christian Greeks that fled from the Mussulman tyrant, who had issued a declaration that their existence could no longer be tolerated—at the price of uniformly, and from the very first, siding with Mussulman executioners against christian victims; and the issuing of a declaration, prohibiting the Ionians, who are under English protection, from assisting their countrymen upon pain of death—at the price of giving an English escort to Turkish ships, loaded with men and stores, for the purpose of bringing a christian people to the sabre and the bowstring of an infidel oppressor—in short, at the price of abandoning all the obligations of justice, humanity, and religion.

Why did not lord Strangford, at this auspicious moment, when the existence of the Ottoman pow-

er depends on the diversion made by England and Austria, stipulate with the Turk for the abolition of the trade in human flesh, which is carried on in all parts of his empire, and under which thousands of WHITE CHRISTIAN SLAVES are every day sold in the markets of every Turkish city? A glorious opportunity offered itself to establish the reputation of British humanity beyond all question, by a stipulation in favour of white christian slaves, similar to that in behalf of black pagan ones. The interests of humanity would be better served by the former than by the latter. I have no particular disposition to question the motives of Mr. Wilberforce, in his long and persevering efforts to procure the abolition of the African slave trade. But whatever were his motives, I cannot but be of opinion, that by making slaves more valuable in the colonies than they were before, he has offered temptations of profit, more than equivalent to the difficulties thrown in the way of the trade. But the best men are apt to overlook obvious consequences in their headlong zeal to benefit mankind. Good intentions are common enough; but the wisdom to direct them to practical good, is seldom their companion.

Be this as it may, beyond all doubt it will be a fruitful text for more hypocritical *cant*, should our government, as I trust it will, finally decline the overture for what lord Londonderry is pleased to call "the right of reciprocal search." This reciprocity consists in the exercise of a right by Great Britain with a thousand ships, which we exercise with twenty or thirty. This is certainly but an indifferent sort of reciprocity for the United States. But it will answer for a pretext to put us out of the pale of humanity, and to enlist all the amiable feelings of mankind against our people and their free institutions. For this purpose, be sure, they will

miss no opportunity to plume themselves upon their superior zeal in the glorious cause of humanity, saying nothing, of course, about the sugar monopoly. It is in vain for our people, or our government, to expect toleration here, except they return to the bosom of the mother country, and do penance in a white sheet at the church doors for all their past offences. Even now, as I am assured by *****, who is a great dabbler in literary secrets, the Quarterly Review is in preparation. He says, the next number will contain an article on the slave trade, in which this advocate of despotism and intolerance, this reviler of nations, this supporter of slavery and oppression in three quarters of the globe, will signalize himself by another furious tirade against our good people and their government. Their real offences are, refusing to admit the right of reciprocal search, and being free and happy. Besides, the hireling is not without hope, that by exaggerating the evils of African slavery, and painting the miseries of the negro in the most exaggerated colours, honest John Bull may in some degree be reconciled to his own sufferings, and become contented, if not happy, in the comparison. It is an amazing inconsistency, to behold the most strenuous advocate of Africa in the person of the most inexorable enemy to freedom in every other quarter of the globe—to see the champion of blacks, in the reviler, insulter, and calumniator of his own countrymen, whenever they struggle with convulsive throes to free themselves from taxation and beggary. Now I am on the subject of parliamentary debates, I may as well give you my free opinion of this assembly and its great orators.

In spite of all the sneers against our talkative congress, uttered both here and at home, I assure you, brother, I should not fear the result of a com-

parison with the British parliament. There is not half the decorum observed in the latter that prevails in the former ; and this remark I may also extend to the courts of justice here, where, notwithstanding the great wigs and formidable gowns of the judges, there is nothing like the silence, attention, and solemnity, which is almost universal in our courts at home. Nearly one-third of the members of parliament are regular Corinthians from the rotten boroughs, sent there by their fathers, or uncles, for sale, instead of being sent to school to learn manners at least. They lounge about, for the most part, without paying the least attention, except when my lord Londonderry puzzles them with his logic, when they cry "hear, hear!" which indeed is all they can do ; for as to understanding his lordship, that is out of the question. He is a perfect cuttle fish in logic. You will hardly believe it ; but I do assure you, some of these independent members may be seen lying upon their backs on the seats, and kicking against the walls with all their might, to testify their approbation of one of his lordship's incomprehensible speeches. Finally, when the house breaks up, they trundle out like so many school-boys dismissed to a long vacation, or so many fiddlers from the orchestra, when the curtain rises to the first act of a tragedy. I must acknowledge, however, they are generally dressed more fashionably than some of our old country members ; but I submit it to my lord Londonderry's logic, whether long skirts and long speeches, with an independent spirit, be not preferable to "hear," "hear," from gentlemen with Corinthian coats and corsets dire, who vote without either giving a reason themselves, or listening to the reasoning of others ?

The better sort of members, such as Mr. Brougham, Mr. Wilberforce, Sir James Mackintosh,

and others, are however, on the other hand, exceedingly worthy, useful, and able men. They discuss some questions with a sagacity and extent of research, highly honourable to themselves and to the country, reminding me not unfrequently of Mr. *****, Mr. *****, Mr. ****, and others of the late members of our congress. But shall I venture upon the heresy? Shall I dare, in the face of old habits, prejudices, and opinions fostered by education, strengthened by books, and the example of all around you, to assert, that these men are not equal to the orators just named? And yet this is as true as that you are alive. With the exception of Mr. Canning, there is scarcely the shadow of an orator in the house of commons; and the house of lords is, beyond all doubt, the most sleepy place in England, except the Italian opera and Mr. Campbell's lectures.

Mr. Brougham is rather a heavy, laborious speaker. To me there appears something somewhat grotesque in his attempts at impassioned oratory, wherein he occasionally displays his zeal and warmth in contortions of face and figure nearly approaching to the ludicrous. He has an iron face and an iron figure, both equally divested of grace or majesty, nor does his action or expression make amends for these deficiencies of face and person. Yet his habits of laborious investigation and research, his extensive range of memory, and his capacity for intellectual arrangement, make him, on the whole, a useful man of business, and a powerful pleader; for his eloquence is little more than special pleading. As the leader of a party in the house of commons, he is at most, however, but second rate. He is much better in subjects where mere labour and investigation are required, and is pre-eminent on school committees and parliamentary inquiries, where he listens with the patience

of a judge, and sifts the evidence with the indefatigable sagacity of a thorough-bred lawyer. But I have heard him occasionally on subjects of foreign policy, wherein the talents of a statesman are put to the test, and was surprised at his crudeness, as well as want of extent of idea and accuracy of information. I certainly have heard a member from our woods talk more sensibly, and display more statesman-like views of the relation of European nations with each other, and with the United States. This lameness, however, in the discussion of great political questions seems common to almost all the great men here, either because those of the opposition do not know the state of their relations with foreign powers, and those of the cabinet do not choose to tell ; or from a want of that enlargement of intellect which is the peculiar characteristic of a great statesman. I will do the opposition the justice to say, that they cannot, as they do in our congress, get whatever information they ask from the executive, and are therefore often obliged to grope in the dark. But lord Londonderry certainly is in all the secrets, as foreign secretary, and he talks like a rebus, seemingly employing the whole force of his understanding in withholding, rather than communicating information. It is quite laughable to hear the Corinthian members cry, "hear, hear!" when he says any thing beyond the comprehension of mortal man. I certainly never saw a more laborious speaker ; but his labour seems most preposterously employed, not in enlightening his hearers, but in perplexing their understandings in an equal degree with his own, by which means alone he seems to expect to carry his point. His logic is the logic of a perplexed, rather than a profound understanding, and his rhetoric is highly worthy of his logic. There is a story told here of a gentleman, who, after listen-

ing to his lordship for a long time, started up at length in great haste, and on being questioned where he was going, replied, "to the house of peers, to know from lord Liverpool what lord Castlereagh means." His action is that of a pump handle when in brisk motion, as you may have learned from Moore's epigram.

Sir James Mackintosh is, I think, a much better writer than speaker, although a very powerful orator on the whole. He is fluent and animated, but too florid and studied to appear natural. I can hardly tell what he wants to make him a fine speaker, except it be nature, or that art which supplies its place in some degree. To read the papers and daily productions which record passing events, and confer a *nine days* immortality, one would suppose Sir James and his compeers were giants of the race of those who warred against the gods, with mountains and torrents of intellectual force and eloquence. But I must again caution you to beware of the deceptions practised upon us at home, by the monstrous and inflated style, which it is now fashionable to use in speaking of every thing rising above mediocrity. The system of puffing is at its most alarming height in this country, and it is quite impossible for the mere reader to judge of the merits of any public man. They must be every thing, or nothing—superlatively great or superlatively mean—the perfection of nature and intellect, or the extreme of littleness and folly.

It is thus that such writers, as the author of *Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk*, and hundreds of similar delineators of character, will speak of Edinburgh reviewers, and Ettrick shepherds, as if the former were of that order of men, of whom it is interesting to know, whether they wear short jackets or long coats in the country, and the latter

were a Burns, the high priest of nature and simplicity, instead of the coarse and vulgar humourist of Blackwood's Magazine. It is thus, too, that every person and every thing, which fashion or party-spirit idolizes for the moment, is wrought into the lineaments of sublimity and greatness, while the real and genuine candidates for immortality, like Sir James Mackintosh, are caricatured by the coarse eulogists, who affect to know what is really intellectual greatness, and have the consummate audacity to pronounce sentence of immortality with a degree of indiscriminate profligacy, that is quite sufficient to ruin a tolerable reputation.

Sir James Mackintosh, like many others, has been injured by these high-flown panegyrics, that have laid him under obligations to the world, which, with all his intellectual wealth, he is unable to repay. He does not realize the anticipations founded upon these vulgar and injudicious praises, although it is to my mind quite certain, that if heard by one who had not appraised him previously by this high standard, he would surprise and delight with his fluent rhetoric and power of reasoning. As it is, he afforded me only another, in addition to the many proofs I had already received, that however the standard of praise might differ in the two countries, the standard of eloquence was quite equal in our country to what it is here at present. Each of the American speakers I have mentioned, and I will add *****, is fully able to contest the palm with any orator of the present house of commons. Mr. Canning, for wit, grace, fluency, and satire, is excellent; but he only skirmishes, for the most part, with an argument, and is satisfied to raise a laugh rather than produce conviction. He is, however, the only man in the house who can keep the rotten borough-dandies awake during a speech, with the exception of lord Londonderry, to

whom they are bound in gratitude, or in hope, to listen, under the penalty of not getting a good place or pension.

If Mr. Wilberforce was not a pious and good man, I should say that he cants a little too much, and votes a little too often with ministers. There is, however, a reason for all things. Mr. Wilberforce is the political head and oracle of the methodists, who are now a body of very considerable weight and influence in parliament. I am of opinion there is a deal of underhand courtship going on between the ministry and methodist leaders, the effects of which are seen in leaving out the queen's name from their liturgy on one hand, and the particular attention paid by lord Londonderry to Mr. Wilberforce's opinions on all occasions. The established church begins to be not a little jealous of this pious intrigue; and it is a fact well known here, that Mr. Brougham's great national education bill was smothered in these mutual fears and antipathies. The dissenters and methodists on one side were afraid, that it would throw into the hands of the established church too great opportunities of instilling their doctrines into the minds of the young people; and the established church was dissatisfied, that the act did not give it a more complete control over the religious opinions of those who were to be educated under the bill. All felt and acknowledged the want of education among the poorer class; all professed a sincere desire that this want should be supplied; but religious bigotry, or religious zeal, as it is politely called, stepped in, and thus condemned the children of the poor to ignorance, until they can reconcile these conflicting interests.

In the mean time the methodists are gathering strength every day. Their admirable system of worldly wisdom; their apparent zeal and sanctity;

their watchful industry, not only in propagating their doctrines, but in stigmatizing those of other sects, together with the aid which a spirit of fanaticism always administers in the progress of a new religion, all combined, have contributed vastly to the increase of their numbers and influence. If I be not mistaken, the time is not far distant, when they will either force a union with the established church, or leave it in a minority. The methodists, and the methodistical church of England people, are now strong in parliament, and their force is daily increasing; for you will recollect, that they have ever refused to be considered as dissenters from the church of England, and that there is nothing in the tests, to which an orthodox methodist may not conscientiously accommodate himself. It is this eligibility to church honours and emoluments, as well as to the civil appointments, that makes this sect an object of peculiar jealousy to the church of England, which, in my humble opinion, committed a great error in not keeping aloof, instead of aiding those plans, of which they either did not perceive the ultimate tendency, or perhaps expected to direct to their own ends by joining in with them. It would have contributed, I think, vastly more to their strength, had the established church remained as a rallying point, to those who wished to continue in the practice of a rational and respectable religion, such as rational respectable people delight to cherish and uphold. They should have kept their fold sacred from the intrusion of these howlings of the wilderness, and in time it would have become the sanctuary of all those, who, when the first effervescence of fanaticism subsides, naturally return to the altar of decency and decorum. As it was, they joined in the plot against themselves, and they will probably be the first victims.

Of this numerous and increasing class, the Methodists, Mr. Wilberforce is one of the principal leaders, and hence the importance given to his late proposition for an adjustment of the differences between the king and queen, by the ministers. It is thought they play into each other's hands, and that Mr. Wilberforce and his friends will support the ministry, so long as the latter covertly aid them in those plans for increasing their weight and numbers, by missions and projects of various kinds, professing religion and humanity as their object, but probably combined with motives not altogether distinct from worldly wisdom and ambition. I would not wish to prejudice you against these projects, but their object is pretty well understood here; and the views of the ministry in aiding them are not altogether inscrutable. Some of the most eminent divines of the church of England are fully aware of the tendency of these plans, and, after attempting to counteract them by similar institutions, have at length come out pretty openly against their whole system, so far as they could venture to do it without bringing their piety and humanity into question. It is in these mutual fears and jealousies that the seeds of a revolution in England lie. A revolution in the church will probably precede, or be coeval with a revolution in the state. Whether Mr. Wilberforce anticipates this, or whether his objects are purely spiritual, is not for me to say; but he looks like a man, who might dream of such matters, and speaks like one of deep views and plans, that baffle the superficial sagacity of statesmen struggling for places. I should not be surprised to see, if I live, the successor of George the Fourth as much of a Methodist, as Oliver Cromwell was a Puritan. The methodists in this country already begin to point us to their ultimate des-

ination, by calling themselves the "Methodist Episcopal Church."

In the mean time, the ministry have a delicate game to play between the different religious interests. On the subject of a full and free toleration of the Catholics, there is much difficulty. The Methodists, who, by the way, have imitated the Church of Rome in the practice of confessions and miracles, hate the Catholics, as different sects of christians are accustomed to hate each other, to the shame and disgrace of their meek, forgiving, and tolerant Redeemer. The Established Church joins pretty heartily in this sentiment. They also agree tolerably well in loyalty to the king, and in supporting the present system of government. While the ministry pay sufficient court to the Methodists to conciliate them, without disgusting the Church of England, all will go well. But it is scarcely probable, I think, that they will be able to please two such clear-sighted and jealous interests for any length of time. Mutual fears of the discontented populace may perhaps keep them friends awhile; but while the dignitaries of the Established Church enjoy and distribute the livings of England, and so long as the Methodists continue to stigmatize them as persons "who make merchandise of men's souls," &c. it is quite impossible for them to be truly cordial with each other. The time will come, perhaps ere a great while, when the church and the landed-interest will become more afraid of the power of the king than the rage of the people; or it may become a question, whether a Methodist clergyman be not eligible to an English bishopric, or to a living under the patronage of the Established Church. Then we may see this temporary superficial good understanding between these discordant spirits, brought about by a mutual panic, yield in the con-

dict of opposing interests and ambition. While Lord Londonderry humours Mr. Wilberforce in his plans for abolishing the slave trade, and speaks reverently of the missions to Africa, India, and Madagascar, Mr. Wilberforce will beyond doubt vote every measure for oppressing the people of England. But it may one day become necessary for his Lordship to decide between Methodism and the Established Church, and then, he will most certainly take the side he has always done—he will consult the best interests of my Lord Londonderry.

The present good understanding, however, most materially strengthens the ministry, in doors and out, so that they pay little or no attention to the opposition, than which nothing can be more disjointed and inefficient, I assure you. Deficient not only in numbers, but in talent and consistency, they appear to have no common principle of union, and can one and all be frightened into the support of arbitrary measures, or at least into acquiescence, by the raw-head-and-bloody-bones spectre of Radical Reform. Mr. Brougham, if I do not mistake, would rather like to be friends with Lord Londonderry, since his enmity is no longer of consequence. But his late language and conduct towards “the most beloved king that England ever saw,” have probably closed the door to official dignity against him, until himself and his party become more formidable. At present, they are not worth buying.

I feel perfectly satisfied, that their weak, unsteady, and apparently unpurposed opposition, is rather detrimental than otherwise to the progress of reform in this country. The people rely upon men who have neither the power, nor, I firmly believe, the will, to breast the exigencies of the times; but who are a knot of peddling, tinkering politicians,

that talk big, bluster finely, but are much more afraid of the Tower and the attorney-general, than of arbitrary power and parliamentary corruption. They are like your big fish, which are ever the greatest cowards. Estimating their own importance most highly, they are the first to run away; while the lesser fry, confiding in their insignificance, remain behind, are caught, and cooked for want of higher fare. These men will never bring about a reform, such as is wanting to the prosperity of the people of this country. Those who undertake this glorious object, must not mind fine, pillory, or loss of ears. Nay, they must, like the noble patriots of our revolution, take the step that devotes them to death if they fail, to immortality if they succeed. Even if they fail, from the blood and the ashes of these unsuccessful victims, arises a host to consummate what they but began.

It is highly amusing to see the solicitude of these patriots to disavow, even when not called on to do so, any community of feeling with the people of this country—I mean the sufferers who asked for bread, and received what was harder than a stone—insult and obloquy, horses' shoes, and bayonets in their bosoms. The word "*radical*," which in reality means only those who are for a free representation in parliament, such as my countrymen enjoy in Congress, is a sort of bugbear here; and such is the abhorrence of the loyal opposition to its very sound, that they would rather acknowledge the divine right of kings, than support a radical reform. Nay, it is whispered they have come to an understanding to banish radical heat and radical moisture from their vocabulary, and for this purpose have applied to Sir Humphrey Davy, to invent new terms to express these two properties. However this may be, in attempting to keep clear of this terrible imputa-

tion on one hand, and on the other to support the character of friends to the people, they blunder upon the most ridiculous inconsistencies, or piddle about with such inconceivable tameness and indecision, that it is no wonder they have lost the hearts of the people, and quieted the fears of the ministry.

Nothing can equal the pretty exchange of complimentary eulogy, which occurs between the ministers and the opposition, whenever the question of enlightening foreign nations, teaching poor children to read, instead of giving their parents a chance of paying by their labours for their education, and such like excellent plans, come up. The noble Lord Londonderry cordially co-operates with the honourable member; while the honourable member seems infinitely delighted at the opportunity of voting for once on the side of ministers, and extols their humanity to negroes, instead of boldly and promptly exposing their hypocrisy, by placing their conduct to the people of England, Europe, Asia, and America, in contrast with this simulated humanity, assumed only for the purpose of deceiving mankind, and cheating the public opinion. Indeed, the opposition snatches with such avidity at every opportunity to be on good terms, and exchange civil speeches, that one cannot help suspecting they would be happy to consummate a permanent union, by surrendering the virgin purity of their patriotism into the arms of ministerial piety and benevolence. I may mistake, but in my poor opinion, the good people here stand but a bad chance for a reform in parliament, or any other branch of the government, if they depend upon the present opposition. Even Sir Francis Burdett seems quite tamed by a few months' imprisonment; and some days ago, on being called upon by Mr. George Canning, dis-

avowed what to most people appeared the plain and unavoidable inference to be drawn from certain reflections thrown out upon that gentleman in a speech at a public meeting. His two daughters appeared lately at the king's levee, which is considered rather an ominous circumstance.

Since the time that Mr. Fox led the opposition, there has been no efficient one in the house of commons, any more than there have been any true patriots since the days of Russel, Hampden, and Sidney, who were willing to sacrifice life, liberty, and a good name, in behalf of the principles of freedom. It would seem, that almost all the stern, inflexible supporters of human rights came over to our country, and there planted the tree of liberty, which would not take root in England. You may form some idea of Sir James Mackintosh's notions of liberty, when I tell you that in this very debate, to which I referred in the early part of this letter, he took an opportunity to class the United States and Great Britain together, as "two nations mutually sharing the same freedom." It appears to me, my brother, that those who go about reforming and revolutionizing a bad government, must begin by setting their lives and fortunes upon the cast. It seems idle to suppose, that an old established despotism, with money and troops at command, will yield its pensions and places, or abandon its ancient abuses, without a struggle, which must bring into jeopardy the lives and fortunes of the most conspicuous leaders on either side. We cannot, therefore, expect much from a knot of reformers, who will not risk any thing in the noble pursuit of national happiness. The chaplet of freedom, like the crown of martyrdom, is only to be worn by the sacrifice, if necessary, of life itself. Liberty, like Religion, must have her martyrs to endear and consecrate her name to all

posterity. To shed one's blood in an honest cause, ennobles that cause; and the great mass of mankind are never fully satisfied of the truth of principles, or the sincerity of their supporters, till they see some of them give an example of devotion, by laying down their lives for it without flinching. One instance of this kind raises up thousands of devotees, willing, nay, anxious, to endure the like persecution, and suffer a similar fate. Such were the primitive martyrs; such too were the puritans and quakers, and such are not the present advocates of freedom in this country. The sight of a troop of yeomanry cavalry is enough to disperse thirty or forty thousand noisy seekers of freedom; and the fear of an *ex officio* from the attorney general will silence the loudest declaimer against parliamentary corruption or constitutional abuses.

My opinion, such as it is, is, that not only the people of this country, but most especially their leaders, must undergo themselves a radical reform, before they will ever bring about one in parliament. Liberty is too great a boon for such clamorous railers. At present, therefore, I see little or no chance of a very speedy change for the better, in the situation of this abused and patriotic people, who, after making the sacrifice of all they are worth, to keep out a foreign tyrant, are now the victims of a system, fast and inevitably approaching to an unqualified despotism of the worst kind, because sanctioned by those laws which echo the mere will of a despot. Certainly if any thing of this kind should take place, it will not be brought about by the virtues of the small politicians composing the opposition. Where then is their freedom to spring from? From themselves alone. When they become like the peasants of Lexington, they will be free, for then they will de-

serve to be free. This will be the case, perhaps, some day or other ; but it is, I think, rather a distant prospect.

From the other classes and parties in the state they have as little to hope as from the opposition. The ruling clergy are bound to the car of majesty by the strong chain of patronage paramount, by tithes, and rich benefices. The nobility are equally dependent on the king, who can not only elevate them to higher titles, but provide sumptuously for their younger children, legitimate and illegitimate, who might otherwise be obliged to turn sharpers or highwaymen. But there is still a stronger obstacle to the introduction of any measures, permanently calculated for the benefit of the people ; I mean the landed interest, the country gentlemen, who, in the better ages of England, were the great barrier between the king, the church, and the nobility, on one hand, and the people on the other. These once gave the tone to the house of commons, and often put ministers in a minority. But a large portion of these have sunk into fund-holders and placemen. Such is the overwhelming patronage, arising from the collection and expenditure of the immense revenue of this country, the vast army and naval establishment kept up, that almost every man of large property in the country, is, in some measure, a sharer in government favours. Those who are not influenced by the hope or enjoyment of this favour, have been frightened into the relinquishment of their own and the people's rights, by the arts of the ministry and their creatures, who have raised such desperate reports of plots and counterplots, agrarian laws, and future bloody massacres, that they have almost to a man become mere instruments in the hands of power. They will probably one day, when it is too late, awake to the con-

sciousness of having sacrificed the remains of their freedom to a groundless panic, raised by interested politicians, to persuade them into a surrender of the constitution.

This system of plots, which is brought into active operation, whenever the apprehensions of the honest country gentlemen subside into something like a glimmering of returning commonsense, I look upon to be the master-piece of policy of my Lord Londonderry and his colleagues, who first frightened John Bull out of his property, by alarms of foreign plans of invasion, and then frightened him out of his remaining liberty, by the terrors of domestic plots. It is a pity, however, for the reputation of these inimitable statesmen, that the manufacture of plots is not an original invention. It is as old as the time of the first abuses of kingly power, and the first resistance of the people. It attained its height in the reign of Charles the Second, and its downfall was speedily followed by the banishment of his successor, and the final exclusion of his posterity from the throne of England. They are, in truth, the last efforts of arbitrary power to delude mankind into the support of its abuses, as well as the surrender of their rights, under the influence of a groundless panic ; and when this machinery is worn out, the farce is at an end. Were it not for this brilliant proof of the abilities of the present ministers, I should be rather tempted to doubt, whether they possessed any other talent than that of an expert money-broker. The art of raising the greatest possible quantity of money out of the people, comprehends the whole mystery of the English government. As I observed before, they are all very indifferent speakers, with the exception of Mr. Canning, and with the same exception, among the dumbest persons in a society over which the genius of dulness presides. I am aware

that there are two sorts of great men—those who talk wisely, and those who act wisely. The former are only theoretically or abstractedly wise; the latter practically so. It is difficult indeed to tell a man by his talk. I have frequently met with men who reversed Rochester's epitaph, and who never said a good thing in their whole lives, yet always acted with the most provoking wisdom, and always got the better of the great talkers. Still it is pretty certain, that no one who talks well can be a great blockhead; and it is equally clear, I think, that many a great blockhead has chanced to stumble, or be driven into a system of policy, the accidental success of which has caused him to pass for a sage. The present ministers have kept their places, and lived to see the downfall of Napoleon. But they certainly were particularly indebted to an early Russian frost, and a weak opposition in parliament, for their triumphs. At present their course is sufficiently obvious. All they have to do is to alarm the church about its tithes, the placemen about their pensions, the rich about their property, and the timid about their lives. They may then continue to rob the nation of its liberties, and the people of their money, so long as there is money or credit left, to pay the interest of the public debt, secure the loyalty of the army, and subsidize the beggarly princes of Europe, who, with the exception of the king of France, whose finances are in a prosperous state, cannot go to war, pay their marriage portions, or entertain each other at a royal feast, without borrowing money from England.

Men of great and splendid talents are, therefore, quite unnecessary in the ministry, except when any invasion of the ancient privileges of the people is meditated. Then Mr. Canning is put

in requisition, to ridicule his opponents and gloss over the measure. At other times, Mr. Vansittart, or Lord Londonderry, is just as good as a Madison, or a Hamilton. On occasions of emergency, they send to France for Mr. Canning, to get Lord Liverpool, or Lord Londonderry out of a scrape. Feeling, as it would appear, his own consequence among these dull lords, Mr. Canning sometimes takes the liberty, as in the case of the Queen, to retire from the support of a ministerial measure. He also keeps up a familiar intercourse in France with Anacreon Moore, the writer of "lascivious lyrics," as Mr. Adams aptly calls him; though Moore is not only a public defaulter, but has likewise made his present majesty quite as ridiculous, as Peter Pindar did his reverend father George the Third—for whose memory I have a great respect, ever since his acquittal, as set forth in the laureat's immortal poem of "Judgment." The taking all these freedoms shows, that both Mr. Canning and the ministers feel that they cannot do without him at a pinch. He is indeed, now that poor Sheridan is gone, a first-rate wit, a star in Bœotia; excellent at a jest, delightful at a dinner table, but not very happy at alliteration, witness the unlucky one of "The reverend and ruptured Ogden."

The ministerial wiseacres begin to suspect, that in putting down Napoleon Bonaparte, that mighty schoolmaster of an old worn out world, they have fallen out of the frying pan into the fire. The best politicians of the last hundred years have always pointed the jealousies of Europe towards the Russian empire. But present fears and pressing interests caused the cabinets of Europe and England to lose sight of future dangers; and there is not one of these powers, that does not look with trembling solicitude towards every movement of the emperor Alexander. The poor pageant, who occupies the

throne of France, has been for some time vacillating between a desire to dissent from the policy of the Holy Alliance, and a fear of the consequences. I have reason to be persuaded, that the omission of king George to pay a visit to Paris originated in a demur on the part of Louis, to a proposition of the British cabinet in relation to the affairs of Greece and Turkey. Much difficulty exists in the French cabinet on this head; and I have but little doubt, that it will lead to a change of ministers, if not of measures, in France.

The emperor of Austria, what between his fears of Russia and of books bound in Russian leather, has no heart just now to attend to his favourite amusement of making sealing-wax. It is rumoured in the ***** circle, that he fainted not long ago at the smell of a book in Russian binding. The king of Prussia is so busy in warring against the four-and-twenty letters, and prosecuting authors for telling him the truth, that he has no time to attend to any thing else. But he is said to have very uneasy dreams. In fact, I assure you, there never was a set of poor people in such desperate perplexity, between a desire to restrain the projects of Russia, and a fear of the almost inevitable consequences of a war—bankruptcy and revolution.

But amid this scene of perplexity and apprehension, nothing can equal the ludicrous situation of the English ministry. Their oracle, the Courier, has all along assured the world, there would be no interruption in the present pacific relations of Europe, and fallen into an immense passion with every body who ventured to suggest the contrary. Of late, I have occasion to know, things have put on an appearance, which has caused a remote sort of suspicion on the part of his majesty's ministers, that Russia is playing a double game. It is understood by the way of Tehesan, that there is a strong

appearance of hostility on the part of Persia towards the Porte, and that every thing indicates an incursion into the dominions of the latter by the Persians. This has made the ministers', particularly lord Londonderry's, hair stand on end, and occasioned the most serious apprehensions of losing their places. The whole of the East lies open to the ambition of Alexander, who, like his namesake of yore, may march to India with scarcely any opposition, except from those he leaves behind him. The British possessions already tremble in that remote quarter. The enervated and miserable slaves of Asiatic despotism will flee from before the hardy sons of the North, as they have always done, like chaff before the wind. There never was before mortal man, I believe, so extensive a career of conquest as that now presented to the emperor Alexander. If he refrain, it will be the strongest proof yet exhibited of the fears entertained by the Holy Alliance, in relation to their own subjects at home.

In the mean time, the Russian government has been at the same moment negotiating a peace, and making preparations for war. The Russian armies are at present more numerous and efficient than those of all Europe besides, and are stationed on the frontiers of Turkey in such a way, as that Constantinople might be taken before the news of hostilities could reach London. Well may the British ministry tremble if a war take place. They have nothing left for it, but to swear there is no danger until the danger arrives, and then set the *Courier* and *Quarterly Review* abusing Alexander like a pickpocket. So soon as I see this, I shall be sure there is difficulty with Russia; for it is always the signal for some refractory movements on the part of a foreign power. The first indication I had of the probable assertion of its indepen-

dence by the French government, was from the abusive article in the *Quarterly*, which I mentioned in a former letter. It is a bull-dog, which is always set at obnoxious people, before the masters come to blows.

P. S. I must not omit to mention, that during the debate on the slave trade, a member, of the name of Smith, rose to vindicate our government from these cunning and malignant charges, connected with the refusal to admit the right of search. Suddenly, however, the Corinthian members and ministers became so impatient for the question, that Mr. Smith could not be heard.

LETTER XVIII.

London.

DEAR BROTHER,

I imagine the people of every age appear worse in the eyes of their cotemporaries, than in those of posterity. The latter judge from history, which confines itself to the great crimes of great persons, and pays no regard to the common and ordinary transgressions of the multitude. The former, on the contrary, being every day stunned with reports of crimes great and small, and initiated as it were into the secrets of every body, make up their opinions from materials, which, being either never recorded at all, or recorded only in the fleeting publications of the times, perish with the excitement and curio-

sity that at first made them interesting. It is thus, or rather it *was* thus, that a large portion of the crimes of one age were forgotten by the next, and posterity spared the painful necessity of blushing for the depravity of their forefathers.

But unhappily for the present age, unless the collections of statistical writers, the registers of annual crime, and the reports of missionary, charitable, and bettering societies, be all got together and burnt, it will certainly go down to posterity with as ragged a reputation, as ever fell to the lot of poor human nature. These laborious people, with the best intentions in the world I verily believe, collect together such a mass of misery, such an aggregate of crime, that, if the truth must be told, human nature appears little better than a beast and a monster. When a society is instituted for the relief of the poor, the first object seems to be, to make a large portion of their fellow-creatures as miserable as possible, in order to work on the charity of the rest, and demonstrate the necessity of their own exertions. When a society is formed for distributing bibles, the same care is taken to make a large portion of their fellow-creatures appear as irreligious as may be. When a society is instituted for bettering the morals, the same care is taken to make a large portion of their fellow-creatures appear as wicked as they can. But when a society is formed for sending missionaries abroad, then whole nations are libelled in a mass, and the innocent Hindoo pictured totally devoid of religion and morals.

The newspapers, those terrible tell-tales, take good care to repeat every instance of brutal ignorance, unprincipled knavery, or diabolical cruelty, until at length the imagination is overwhelmed with accumulated horrors, and the whole world seems but one vast theatre of wickedness. Thus are mankind unfortunately robbed of their good

name, by the very means resorted to for the purpose of making them wiser and better. Before I proceed to draw any conclusions from these observations, as to the real state of morals in this country, and the supposed increase of crime, I will give you a case in point, in order to illustrate the mode in which whole nations are calumniated by the too zealous friends of the human race. The substance is compiled from the proceedings of the "Bombay Literary Society."

Captain Kennedy, an officer of character and talents, long resident in India, laid before the society a memoir, exposing the misrepresentations of British historians and missionaries with respect to the moral and intellectual state of the Hindoos. These describe the upper casts as addicted to every species of fraud and villany; as killing their inferiors with as little scruple as christians do a beast; that the inferior casts are profligate and depraved, committing the greatest crimes with the least possible provocation, and realizing a degradation below that of the beasts; that all classes, in the mass, are destitute of every moral and religious principle—cunning, deceitful, addicted to flattery, deception, dishonesty, falsehood, and perjury; that they indulge without scruple in hatred, revenge, and cruelty, and give full play to the most furious and malignant passions, fostered by the gloomy and remorseless principles of their religion; that they perpetrate villany with a cool deliberation that astonishes an European; that they are litigious, insensible to the sufferings of others, inhospitable, avaricious, contemptuous, harsh to their women, and altogether devoid of filial, parental, and conjugal affection.

Captain Kennedy justly remarks in his preliminary observations, that such calumnies contradict themselves, since no society can possibly subsist,

among whom these vices are so universally prevalent. He then examines the principal charges above enumerated. He maintains, that these either originated in political views ; with persons only slightly acquainted with the natives ; and most especially with *the Missionaries* ; and he sums up the result of his experience as follows : “ It will appear from these observations, that of falsehood the Hindoos are entirely innocent ; and that their insincerity proceeds from the circumstances of their situation, as a conquered people, and not from any natural propensity ; that they have never yet committed perjury in a British court of justice ; that their religion exerts no improper influence on their morals ; and that the institution of *Casts*, so far from being inimical to refinement or virtue, has, on the contrary, been most probably one great cause of the civilization of the Hindoos ; and that it not only always has been, but still is, a great preservative of their morality. Nor can there be a stronger proof, that the Hindoos have been unjustly accused of general depravity, and of being void of every moral and religious principle, than the simple circumstance, that in India *crimes are of rarer occurrence and of less magnitude than in England.*” Captain Kennedy then proceeds to establish this assertion, by a comparison of the records of courts of justice in England and India, as presented in the respective reports of parliament for the year 1815. From these it appears, that there were in British India, which contains at least three times the number of inhabitants that Great Britain and Ireland do, 2293 convictions less than in England. He therefore very justly draws the inference, that admitting the records of courts of justice to present a fair estimate of the comparative morality of nations, and if the English be, as they represent

themselves, the most moral people that ever existed, it must necessarily follow, that the Hindoos are even more moral than the most moral christian nation of the world. These statements of Capt. Kennedy are fully corroborated by a memoir of Mr. Coates, who resided a long time among the Hindoos, and from having been one of the principal agents for introducing vaccination, had consequently full opportunity of studying their domestic habits and domestic morals.

From such specimens of what may be done in the way of defaming whole nations, added to the industrious researches of statistical writers, the reports of societies, &c. may be derived plenty of materials for posterity to draw a conclusion, certainly not very favourable to the present age. This information is industriously circulated all over the christian world ; and thus are rival nations amply provided with a stock of materials for indulging their antipathies, and keeping alive that restless feeling of wounded sensibility or irritated pride, which finally vents itself in bloody wars and national injuries.

For the foregoing reasons, I shall not, in replying to your inquiries, draw my conclusions as to the moral state of the people of this country, from those annual reports of the various societies for reform, which I am quite satisfied are fraught with exaggerated statements. Where they do not find want and vice, they sometimes make it, I fear, for the purpose of giving importance to their labours. It is sufficiently clear, that a people, like the English, to whom public and private charity has been extended till they have almost lost the honest pride that used to make them spurn at pauperism, will not be apt to resist the seductions of one of these societies for recruiting beggars. When they are actually courted by inquirers that

call at their doors to plead guilty to poverty, is it not natural to suppose, they will make the most of their wants in the certainty of being relieved? So too, when Mrs. Fry goes about offering her advice and her charity to those women alone who have "lost the immediate jewel of their souls," and refusing it to those who cannot plead the title of infamy and corruption to her bounty—is it not probable that starving wretches, bereft of every other hope of relief, will be tempted to bear false witness against themselves, rather than perish with hunger? Thus does it seem highly probable, that the apparent quantity of vice, as well as the aggregate of poverty, is considerably increased by the accession of many who are not absolutely paupers, nor actual women of the town. Still, making every possible allowance, there is, beyond all question, more absolute poverty, and its natural consequence, more prominent vice in England, than can be contemplated without disgust and horror. There is, too, a character of coarse ferocity, of daring hardihood, in the present race of villains, that is probably the result of the almost indiscriminate severity of the laws. Every transgressor of these must be accustomed to look death in the face, since there are but a few crimes of the lesser degree, that do not carry with them the penalty of capital punishment. The consequence is, a daring disregard of the lives of others, which are sported with without remorse; and an habitual antipathy to those laws and institutions which enforce a punishment so disproportioned to the crime. I speak only of lesser thefts; for, you well know, I am no believer in the modern doctrine that crimes will diminish with the fear of punishment. The truth probably is, that the two extremes of severity and lenity are equally injurious to the morals of a community. Notwithstanding they are

such sticklers for morals and piety, the English writers, in speaking of this daring ferocity in their footpads, highwaymen, &c. have indulged a most preposterous vanity, by placing this characteristic to the account of a sort of heroism, which, though rather misdirected, was still a proof of their superiority over other nations, where the like praiseworthy disregard of their own and others' lives, was not so common. I have observed in more than one English writer, certain sneers at Frenchmen, Italians, and Spaniards, because they were not equal to their countrymen in the noble practice of *robbing on the highway*. But let them enjoy this boast in quiet, while I proceed to show you pretty clearly, that it is next to impossible, while the present state of things continues, that the condition of morals should be better than it is, or that it should not continue to keep pace with the increase of poverty.

It may, I think, be doubted, whether one human being is originally constituted with a greater aptitude to vice than another. The difference then must be in education, opportunity, temptation, example, and a hundred other circumstances, that combine to lead mankind into the practice of vice. Of these, want, and its attendant offspring, ignorance, are perhaps the most powerful and universal. Want is our master. A human being, in want of the common comforts of life, is in some degree an alien to the society of which other men, to his perception, reap all the benefits. He cannot reverence those laws which secure to others all the luxuries, while he is in want of the necessities, of life; nor is it in human nature, that a half-starved wretch should love those who exhibit to his contemplation at all times the contrast of luxurious indulgence. Thus a person habitually in want, can have little community of feeling with

the society of which he is a member, and little reverence for those laws of which he feels nothing but the lash or the pressure. Again : men love the laws because they are the sureties for their lives and fortunes. But a man, without any thing he can call his own, and whose life is rendered a worthless possession by the want of all those comforts that alone make it valuable, what does he care for that protection which is of no value to him ?

The reputation of a man is likewise another tie to restrain him from acts which bring with them disgrace and punishment. But what influence can this have over the wretched outcast, who either dwells in filth and poverty at home, or roams abroad a beggar by day, and a thief by night ? The sufferings of the body supersede those of the mind, most especially among the poor and ignorant, nor is it probable, that the disgrace of beggary and theft will weigh for a moment against the temptation of relieving hunger, or obtaining the means of some temporary indulgence. The opinions of society, which furnish so powerful a moral restraint, can therefore have little influence on one who associates only with unfortunate creatures like himself, and who is little restrained by the notice, or benefited by the example, of those above him.

The fear of death, or imprisonment, or some other punishment, is also one of the principal restraints in preventing a violation of the laws. But the fear of death must necessarily operate with less effect upon a poor wretch, whose life is a series of privation and suffering. That desperate intrepidity, which animates the transgressor in the moment of his crime, originates not more in the temptations of want, than in a disregard of life. So in the lesser degrees of punishment.—Imprisonment is no great matter to him who has no

home, or a home destitute of every comfort ; nor are the scanty fare and poor pallet of a prison, objects of horror to one who has neither bed nor board at home. As to poor-houses and penitentiaries, they are the paradise of houseless wretches. Thus it would seem, that abject and hopeless poverty, combined with ignorance, is almost inevitably placed out of the reach of the operation of those legal and moral restraints that prove more or less effectual with the other classes of mankind.

This country has, beyond doubt, a greater proportion of people without the necessities of life, or the means of honestly acquiring them, than any other I have ever visited. I do not know that they are more positively poor, but they certainly are so comparatively. A large portion of the labouring class here possess more actual property, than the same class of people in Italy, Spain, and Portugal ; but they require more, because their taxes are far greater and their habits are different. In the south of Europe, the people live on grapes, chestnuts, olives, and other fruits that are plenty and cheap ; at night they can sleep under a tree, or under the canopy of heaven ; they neither want thick clothing nor constant fires in winter ; nor is it necessary they should have a warm and weather-tight house over their heads. But the labouring Englishman, until of late years, was accustomed to meat sometimes, and always to bread, cheese, and beer, in a reasonable quantity. Now, it is otherwise with him. He inhabits too a climate humid at all times, and cold in winter, and cannot sleep in the air, or in an open hovel, without the risk, if not the certainty, of ruining his health. It is these and other considerations, that make his actual situation far worse than the peasant or the labourer in the south of Europe, although his actual comforts may appear superior to theirs. Indeed, it

cannot be denied, and it is certainly not in triumph, but sorrow, that I am compelled to state, that the poor of this country are now, at this moment, more wretched, and more numerous, than any where on the continent of Europe—I believe I may say, in the whole world. It is not uncommon to see in the country towns, thirty, forty, and fifty people, consisting of stout, hearty labourers, their wives and children, applying at one time for admission into the parish poor-houses. It is neither laziness nor improvidence, that has brought them to this; but the want of employment, and the exactions of the government and the clergy, which actually drive them into the poor-house for a refuge. If there ever were a noble nation sacrificed to the abuses of power; the extravagance of its rulers; and the patchwork system of expedients, invented by prodigality in the last stage of fatuity and desperation, it is this nation of Englishmen, who, in the course of their history, have equalled the Romans in patriotism, the Greeks in literature, and the Americans in defending their rights against the encroachments of power. But poverty and dependence, the offspring of financial swindling and misapplied resources, have undermined the noble foundation of the national character, and the superstructure seems crumbling and corroding fast away.

This abject poverty is the secret of almost all their mobs, crimes, and apparently ridiculous inconsistencies, that go near to deprive them of our sympathy. That they murmur at the government is because they want bread; that they rise in mobs, is not that the spirit of Radicalism, but the spirit of suffering, impels them to violence; that they one day execrate their king, and the next shout at his heels, and grovel at his feet, is because they are hungry, and care is taken, when His Majesty

goes on a tour, to quicken their loyalty by distributions of food and ale. A few loaves and a barrel of beer will set crowds of these poor people praising the king, whom an hour before they cursed in the paroxysms of hunger. That their crimes every day multiply, and the restraints of a severe penal code become more and more insufficient to prevent their transgressions, is, in a great measure, owing to their miserable situation, which makes a prison no longer terrible; transportation an object of hope rather than fear; and death itself an alternative hardly to be dreaded. The other day, a fellow, being sentenced to fourteen years' transportation, cried out, "God bless your honour, it's just what I wanted."

Other minor causes operate in producing the relaxation of morals so perceptible to strangers here. In every country, much of the good or evil habits of the people will depend upon the ministers of the gospel. If these mix with their flocks, not to shear, but to instruct them by their precepts and example; if they be watchful in observing, and patient in repressing, those evil habits that are to be found more or less every where; and if they so conduct themselves as to be looked up to as the parents and monitors of the people, over whose devotions they preside, the effects will be seen in the deportment of their parishioners. They will the more likely practise what is preached to them by one who is himself an object of reverence and regard, and whom they are accustomed to follow as a lamb does his kind shepherd; to obey, not from fear, but affection. Much indeed of the good or bad habits of civilized people depends on their spiritual guides. Doctor Vicesimus Knox, in his work, entitled "Liberal Education," says, "I verily believe that much of the corruption of morals, and unbelief in religion,

which is now visible throughout the nation, is derived from the ignorance, carelessness, and vice, of clergymen trained in the universities of England."

If the higher and more wealthy dignitaries of the church are thus educated in "ignorance, carelessness, and vice," and content themselves with placing their flocks under the superintendence of some poor curate, whose very poverty takes away all dignity from his profession, and makes even the gospel ridiculous, while they themselves are dangling at court, or hanging upon some great man for richer benefices, or higher honours, it cannot be expected that these can have much influence in mending the manners or morals of the people. Or if those who do remain among their parishioners, perform their duties in a careless, slovenly manner, on the sabbath day, while they are all the rest of the week devoting themselves to worldly amusements and enjoyments, it were better for the people that they did not reside among them, to contaminate them by examples of gluttony and self-indulgence. It will not be denied, nay it is a common charge urged almost every day against the clergy of the Established Church, that a large proportion of them either do not reside on their livings, or if they do, might as well stay away. A vast many of them, by virtue of being qualified as chaplains to the king, the princes, or some nobleman or other, possess a plurality of benefices, without regard to distance, so that it is impossible for them to reside in two or three places, or be at two or three churches at one time. Others, or perhaps these very reverend duplicate and triplicate rectors, are justices of the peace, and generally noted as the most rigid, inflexible inquisitors into the just division of tithes. They come among the people, not as the shepherd

comes among his flock, except indeed it be at shearing time; and their parishioners, instead of walking forth with smiling confidence to meet and welcome them to their firesides, view them as licensed robbers, come to receive a tenth of that, the whole of which is scarcely sufficient for the support of their families. It is not in the nature of things, that a ministry so constituted and so conducted, can do its duty to the people and their Creator. If they neither reside with them, or residing, fail in the sacred duties of zealous instruction and example—if, instead of coming among them to gather lambs for the fold of the great Shepherd, they come to take from the flock the tenth wether; from the orchard the tenth apple; from the field the tenth sheaf; and from the hen the tenth chicken; it would betray a total ignorance of human nature to suppose either their visits or their advice would be attended with any salutary effects.

The teachers of the Evangelical School, as it may be called, in England, however, cannot be accused of this want of zeal and attention. They certainly take every measure of spiritual, as well as worldly zeal, to extend their influence and increase their numbers. But I really am inclined to believe, that to make a methodist is not exactly synonymous with making a good moral person. I will go farther, and venture, in the face of all the cant of the times, to doubt, whether the world is wiser or more virtuous for the labours of the zealous missionaries of the new evangelical school. People, who inculcate a doctrine which makes the duties of a citizen subservient to a mystical and abstract piety, undefined and undefineable—who substitute for the ties of kindred a mysterious union of souls, consummated, no one knows how, at midnight feasts of love, or secret communings in the wilderness—

who disdain to acknowledge any good offices of man, unless he be of their own creed ; who give themselves a license to be ungrateful, and return the obligations of kindness and hospitality by ascribing them to a miracle of heaven, instead of a kindly feeling of worldly benevolence—a people, who act on such a dereliction of the obligations and duties that are absolutely essential to the existence of the social state, and the happiness of mankind, can hardly exercise any favourable influence over the morals of their fellow-creatures. Wherever Methodism prevails, I have, indeed, observed less outward violations of decency, less cock-fighting, horse-racing, and drunkenness, but at the same time I must be allowed to say, those vices that strike more deeply at the root of human happiness, seemed to have taken the place of the others. The people were more outwardly decent, but their decency covered a multitude of sins. On the whole, however, I am inclined to believe, that they have not done much more harm than good. One thing is certain, they have awakened the dormant zeal of more rational religionists, and thus contributed to the revival of a warmer feeling of attachment to doctrines more consonant to an enlightened age.

It has been frequently observed, that the progress of the primitive christian religion gradually produced an amelioration in the criminal code of every nation where it obtained an ascendancy. This effect was, I think, beyond doubt owing to the distinct and impressive avowal it contained of the immortality of the soul, and a state of future rewards and punishments, bestowed or inflicted in proportion to the faith and *good works* of men. The hope of future rewards, and the fear of everlasting punishments, coming in aid of temporal laws, rendered it safe to soften the severity of the latter, without endangering the security of person or pro-

perty, as there would still remain a moral restraint, superior to that which existed previously to the introduction of the christian religion. But it is pretty obvious, that where a religion prevails among a large portion of the lower orders, which consists merely in a mysterious and abstract doctrine of perfectibility, independently of moral duties or virtuous actions, it can no longer stand as a barrier to the evil propensities of mankind, or come in aid of temporal punishments in the prevention of crimes.

Another minor cause, which, though it does not operate so extensively, still assists in depressing the state of morals here, is the very general extravagance and profligacy of the princes, the nobility, and the people of wealth. As the fashion of the king's coat descends to the fashionable people, and thence down to all those who can afford to adopt it, so do the vices of the monarch descend to and infect the whole mass of the nation, who can more easily imitate his vices than his coat. You cannot conceive, my dear brother, the tyrannical and unbounded sway of kingly and lordly example in this country, where the abject spirit of dependence causes almost every man to look up to those above him, for consequence in society. His present majesty, like all kings, in truth, has got a dispensation from his subjects for almost every breach of the moral law. They make the most liberal allowance, not only for his freaks of extravagant foolery, his excessive indulgence in capricious and unbounded prodigality, but also for his more serious offences. Kings, do the most orthodox people here argue—kings cannot indulge their affections, or gratify their wishes, in the choice of a wife—they must marry to obtain allies, to strengthen their people, or to gain an accession of wealth or territory. That is to say, they sacrifice their affections on the altar of

ambition or avarice; and while they swear, in the presence of God, to love, and cherish, and protect their wives, hate them in their hearts most cordially, or, at best, feel nothing but perfect indifference. This first departure from truth and honour gains them, it seems, absolution for every other consequent transgression. If they neglect their wives, they must be excused, because they married without love; if they commit adultery with the wives of other men, they must be pardoned, because they married for the honour, and happiness, and prosperity of the nation—in short, every crime, and every folly, must be overlooked in a king of England, because, not only the king can do no wrong, but if he could, he shall be excused, because, as the most orthodox people say, he must not be judged by the criterion applied to other men. Even Mrs. Grant and Mr. Wilberforce can pardon his present majesty, for having had as many mistresses in succession as Galaor-de-Gaul. I must not omit to apprise you, that the marchioness of H***** is no longer the *chère ami*. Before his majesty went to Ireland, he selected the marchioness C*****, an Irish lady, whose husband is his particular friend, and two of whose sons are at present in his suite on the continent. This is neighbourly now. Some low-bred husbands and sons, particularly if they happened to be republicans, might be apt to disdain such honours as these, purchased at the price of a wife's and a mother's infamy; but such is not the case here, where the female favourite of a profligate monarch is an object of jealousy, as well as envy, to half the ladies at court. Whether the compliment paid to Ireland, in thus selecting the wife of an Irish nobleman for his temporary queen, was one cause of his majesty's great popularity there, must be left to conjecture.

A similar latitude is permitted to the other members of the royal family, who, as well as the king, all marry for the good of their country, and are, therefore, very reasonably exempted from the obligation of the marriage vow. Few races of princes have given a greater latitude to this tacit dispensation, than their royal highnesses, the king's brothers. His grace of **** has indeed been more cautious in his amours, since the memorable exposition of Mrs. Clarke. But it was, some two years ago, a common whisper in the higher circles, that ***** and his brother ****, encouraged the intimacy of golden B****, as he was called, on account of his vast wealth, for the purpose of winning his money at play. The duke, the other day, won six thousand pounds at Epsom races; and it is frequently announced in that "mirror of fashion," the Morning Chronicle, that he has "deigned" to accept the stewardship of this or that race course. But for all this, he is a very moral person, and president, or patron, of an infinite number of societies for the propagation of morality and piety.

The duke of ***** being in his grave, I will say little of him, except that I recollect, when a boy, his travelling through the States from Canada, of which he was governor, publicly in company with a mistress. He died insolvent, notwithstanding the liberal provision made for him by the nation. The duke of C*****, who was stabbed by an Italian valet, whose wife he had attempted, was so notorious a gambler and profligate, that it is a fact well known, that more than one gentleman refused to let his son serve under him in the army, for fear of the contagion of his example.

But the flower and cream of this royal race is his grace of *****, whose natural children, to the number of—I cannot tell how many—have

lately been pensioned for the encouragement of morality. It is only repeating stale news, to tell you that this illustrious royal highness, whom all people are expected to treat with the "respect due to his exalted rank," was for a long time in a great measure maintained by Mrs. ***** the actress, whom, in the decline of life, he left to poverty and distress. He finally left her to go a courting to Miss T***** L***, who refused him.

Of the duke of Sussex I know nothing particularly reprehensible. Being a sort of radical, it is necessary that he should keep up some degree of respectability of character. He has been several years associated with the popular side, probably in conformity with the plans of the royal houses of Europe, one of whose members always joins the malcontents, for the purpose of being placed at their head, to betray their cause whenever he can do it to most advantage. And here I will take occasion to observe, that there is no surer indication that a people are not yet prepared for freedom, nor a more certain sign that they will not attain it, than their selecting a leader from those very privileged classes, against which their designs are most particularly levelled. To select a prince to lead a revolution, whose object is liberty, betrays the secret, that the people still cling to their ancient prejudices in favour of rank and noble blood, and consequently cannot possibly realize that feeling of equality which is so essential to freedom. This selection also argues a total ignorance of human nature, since it proceeds upon the supposition, that a man can at once divest himself of those aristocratic feelings and habits which he inherited with the first breath of life, and which have strengthened with every breath he drew. I have had the honour of seeing and hearing the duke of Calabria, whom the *patriots* of Naples selected as

their leader. In common cases he would be called an absolute dolt, a most unadulterated fool ; but being the son of a king, he must only be designated as "a weak prince." I saw him once at the annual miracle of the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius, where, by the by, we heretics are always welcome, on the supposition that it is impossible to resist the conviction of our senses. By the way, too, it is one of the most clumsy and palpable impositions I ever saw ; but at the conclusion, the archbishop always gravely cautions his hearers against the illusions of superstition ! On this occasion, the blood being rather longer than usual in liquefying, as the archbishop's hands were a little cold, the assembled multitude began to threaten the saint with a pelting. But the prince ! I shall never forget the stupid stare which preceded, and the still more stupid astonishment which succeeded the miracle. I thought his great leaden eyes would have darted forth like two bullets. That such a man should be selected to lead a revolution ! why, he is hardly fit for a king. But I am rambling from my subject.

I would be running against the whole current of human nature, not to take it for granted that the nobility and gentry, who make such liberal allowances for the vices of their princes, will not be inclined to shelter themselves under this rule of relaxation. I am almost afraid, indeed, that this kind allowance for the vices of others is, one half of the time, nothing more than the expectation of a *quid pro quo* on their part. The nobility and higher orders, like the princes of the blood, are likewise *obliged* to marry for the good of their families ; to increase their wealth, or extend their influence by means of powerful connexions. Nothing is more natural than that these also should claim an exemption from the ordinary rules which

govern common people, who are so insignificant that they can marry for pure love. That they make full use of this exemption is proved by the records of *Doctors Commons*, and a great many instances that are only whispered in fashionable circles. I have heard enough of these to stain almost half the peerage with suspicion of illegitimacy. But I do not know that these stories are true; nor in fact, do I believe one half of them; for the present race of young nobility bear ample testimony to the legitimacy of their descent, by their frivolity and extravagance.

It is indeed impossible to conceive the capricious, unheard of extravagance of the rich, which actually seems to keep pace with the increasing miseries of the poor. Every where, except among a very few of the old-fashioned nobility and gentry, I see the most wasteful follies, the most unbounded love, nay, passion, for expensive pageantry and vulgar ostentation. If a lady of fashion give a party, nothing will satisfy her, unless fruits equally tasteless and expensive are served up with a profusion equally senseless and absurd; and she would be miserable for life, if the number and the cost of each were not advertised in all the fashionable newspapers. The particulars of her dress, the quantity of diamonds, and the net value of the lady as she stood in her shoes, must also be published, in the style of a vender of quack-medicines, while every thing, which real good breeding and well constituted gentility would avoid and despise, is said and done, to make her equals envy, her inferiors despair, and the hungry multitude become more fully aware of their misery by comparison. It often makes me smile even in the bitterness of my feelings, to hear the lady of the gala simpering out, "Two guineas a-piece," when asked the price of such peaches as the pigs run away from in New-England.

Some of them are so impenetrable, that a young lady actually, as it is said, distorted her lower jaw in attempting to make an impression upon one of these hardened sinners. In strict justice to the peach I must say, however, that there was a difference of opinion on the subject, it being held by some, that the mishap was owing to a desperate fit of yawning, such as is common at an English party of pleasure. I am inclined to this last theory, having twice come within an ace of a similar catastrophe at a party, where there were several literary phenomena, and the peaches cost two guineas a piece.

This extravagance is held by the adepts in political economy to be a great national blessing. If, for instance, Madame Catalani receive a few thousand guineas for singing "God *shave* the king," as she always pronounces it, at galas and concerts, it is all for the good of the people of England, because she goes and spends the money in France or Italy, or invests it in the English funds, where the people have the pleasure of paying the interest. The great sums in fact, thus squandered away by the extravagance of the court and nobility, never return to the tenantry, from whom they are originally derived. That portion which does return is so long in coming, that poverty too often gets the start of it. But the greatest part goes to foreigners, without circulating at all among the community. Flatterers, dancers, singers, pimps—and a thousand useless, or worse than useless, people, share the spoil of prodigality, and carry the greatest part out of the country. It is only those immediately about the court, or who can gain the patronage of some court sycophant, that partake of this expenditure, or receive any benefit from it, either directly or indirectly. England at this moment, and most especially London, exhibits a strik-

ing proof, how little the boundless prodigality of a court and nobility can contribute to the real comfort of the community at large. There is more extravagance and more misery in London, than in any other city of the world.

In every country, which has been settled long enough to exhibit the invariable course of all earthly communities from rudeness to order, from order to refinement, from refinement to luxury, and from luxury to ruin, it has always happened, that the example has been first set among the higher orders. To them we may trace elegance and refinement, and from them is derived that example of profligate, luxurious sensuality, which corrupts the lower orders, and at length ends in the downfall of states and empires. When therefore the Quarterly Review, and the other stern advocates of despotism, talk of the ignorance, corruption, and wickedness of the lower orders, instead of deriving all this from Paine's works, Cobbett's tracts, and Carlile's and Hone's pamphlets, they should tell the honest truth, that it is the example of the king, the clergy, and nobility, that has descended to a people, already fitted by their poverty to adopt the worst models. To a people prepared by education and example, precept and habit, to look up to princes and nobles; the fashion which is set them by these is more powerful and efficacious, than the best moral codes, and the most orthodox exhortations, enforced by abundance of societies for the bettering of mankind. There is hardly a man in England, but what is acquainted with the character of the king and princes at least. When therefore he is exhorted by a society, of which one of these royal sinners is the president or patron, it is much more likely he should recollect the example of the patron; than the exhortations and precepts of the society. It is not indeed very likely, that a poor person will imitate a

king in the dignity or splendour of his vices. But the king's bad example will, in all probability, weaken his respect for virtue itself, and produce an aptitude for the vices within his own sphere of temptation. Kings are not near so far off as they used to be. The people, at least those of Europe and this country, have their eyes upon their monarchs, who also begin to approximate themselves a little nearer the level of human nature. Their vices and their virtues, therefore, become more direct objects of affection or dislike, imitation or abhorrence; and are likely to exercise a more powerful influence on both manners and morals. Among the bigoted barbarians of the middle ages, neither the vices of a king or his priesthood were objects of much consequence to the people, except as they affected their temporal concerns, because both were contemplated with a stupid reverence, which fettered the judgment, and overawed the imagination. They did not apply the same rules, nor did they estimate their conduct by the standard they used in estimating their own. But the period is approaching, or rather has already arrived, when kings must pay homage to their people, at least by observing those outward rules of decorum and virtue, without which an ordinary man cannot be respected, and a monarch will no longer be permitted to reign. It was in these virtues and talents that the office of king originated, and it is only by meriting the dignity, in like manner, that it can endure beyond a certain period of human patience and human ignorance, unless, indeed, as too often happens, the people sink in the scale with their king. I do not think it is refining too much, to state, as one of the causes of petty crime in this country, the mode in which so many of these cases are presented to the public in the newspapers. Almost every one of these has a column, and sometimes

two, of reports of cases at the police offices, for the gratification of their readers. If, as is very frequently the case, there be any thing odd or ridiculous in the culprit, or the offence, or the mode of examination, it never fails to be made still more so by the witty reporter, who involves the whole affair, magistrate and all, in fun and frolic. A crime is thus presented to the reader as a mere joke, an excellent subject for the wit of the justice, and the amusement of the public. It is divested of all its turpitude and atrocity, and instead of a serious offence to society, appears as a subject for jest and laughter. It is to be remembered, that the principal reading of the lower orders is confined to newspapers, and that the most interesting subjects of vulgar curiosity are the records of crimes and punishments. Now, if courts of justice and culprits are thus made to furnish subjects of merriment, and crimes become the objects of joke and ribaldry, it is very easy to be conceived, that those whose morality is not well fortified, will very likely yield to the seduction of such pleasant recreation.

If my preceding observations be correct, you will perceive, that it is scarcely possible there should not be a more than ordinary degree of turpitude, a greater portion of crime here, than is to be found among contemporary nations. In France, where the people are comparatively comfortable, and where the king and nobility have before them an awful example of the consequences of despising the just resentment of millions of human beings, crimes are diminishing every day. In this country, on the contrary, where the king and nobility seem to have forgotten, that they only escaped a similar lesson by the breadth of a hair, crimes are every day increasing. They are gradually ascending into the more respectable classes, and descending to the meridian of childhood. In my occasional

attendance at the Old Bailey, Hatton Garden, Bow-street, Guildhall, and other places where the police officers hold their state, I have frequently been shocked to see men and women, evidently well educated, and whose manners bore testimony to their former respectability, arraigned for crimes, not the effect of sudden passion or instantaneous impulse, but of reflection and plan ; during the organization of which, the crime and its probable consequences must have been looked steadily in the face. Such instances are not, however, frequent ; but occurring even rarely, they point to a state of morals verging towards the last stage of corruption, or to a state of society, in which the temptations of poverty are ascending to a higher class than usual.

But it is the number of little children almost every day brought before the police in the great cities, and especially in London, for crimes more or less atrocious, that affords the most melancholy proof of the decay of public morals, originating principally from the increase of poverty. Whether it be from ignorance, or hardihood, or want, I cannot say ; but these little wretches discover neither penitence nor fear. They seem either so hardened by guilt, or brutified by suffering, as to be incapable of shame, and indifferent to punishment. It is shocking to see them. Both reason and humanity shudder at the contemplation of these poor little ragged, dirty, and depraved creatures, whom the unjust distribution of the means of instruction and subsistence has brought to this early maturity of wickedness. It is among the triumphs of this boasted system, which we yankees are every day called upon to imitate, that under the eye of a government expending seventy millions sterling a year—within reach of the example of a nobility rolling in wealth—and of the instructions of a clergy richly endowed almost beyond example—bands

and combinations of little children, from eight to fourteen years old, associate not only for simple pilfering, but for more elaborate plans of swindling and depredation. I send you some of the reports of magistrates and societies, which, although in my opinion much exaggerated, have a terrible foundation in truth. To these I could add instances of the most singular precocity in guilt; but as I am not an amateur of human depravity, I will not pain myself by the recital. A single example of atrocity is no ground for condemning a whole people; and it is only where they are frequent, that any conclusion ought to be drawn from them.

My principal object in writing this long letter was, to point out to you the inevitable consequences of a vast disproportion of wealth, and enormous public burthens, that press the people down to the dust;—of those artificial distinctions of rank, which, being hereditary, require neither moral nor intellectual superiority to preserve them, and become in the end a warrant for the indulgence of every wanton and capricious impulse of folly or vice. This inequality of wealth, and these hereditary distinctions of rank, enable the possessors to despise the suffrages of mankind; to insult their poverty with a display of wasteful extravagance; and to corrupt their morals by examples of vicious indulgence. These enormous public burthens, the inattention of the well-beneficed clergy to almost every thing but the collection of tithes, together with the profligate extravagance of the rich and nobility, have, all combined, gone near to ruin one of the finest and noblest nations under the sun. That they are not thoroughly corrupted and debased, is a proof of the excellent materials of which the national character was composed. At the time, or perhaps just before, our ancestors came to Plymouth, England

might have challenged the world for inflexible integrity, diffused intelligence, and noble patriotism ; nor was there a country in existence, where the principles of civil liberty were more cherished or better understood. But profligate kings, a dissipated nobility, a lazy and luxurious clergy, a paper system, and unexampled taxes, have at length undermined that high character, and left little else but the imperishable mummy to show what once she was.

Every day, and every country I visit, add to my affection for my home, and my attachment to a republican form of government. I am more and more convinced of its intrinsic superiority over all others, in diffusing a general and equal happiness over all ; in preventing the permanent and lasting accumulation of wealth, which enables one class of men to tread on the necks of another from generation to generation ; and in destroying that hereditary and low-lived feeling of inferiority, which debases the mass of the people, and crows the master spirit of manhood. Let the advocates of kings clank their chains, and persuade us it is music ; let them place the groveling feeling of loyalty above the ennobling sentiment of patriotism, and lift their pageants to the level of plain George Washington—but do not let them persuade you to be ashamed of the simplicity of our government, the plain coats of our President and officers of state, nor the cheapness with which we obtain the services of our most illustrious citizens. It is not those who are best paid, or who wear the most diamonds, that are the greatest men. My Lord Londonderry, with his thousands and tens of thousands a year, will never be put on a level with Franklin, in his plain snuff-coloured coat ; nor will Prince Esterhazy, whose diamonds made Sir Walter Scott's mouth water, ever reach the

level of the simple majesty of Washington, in his black velvet suit. The very admiration which is bestowed upon such idle pageantry, not only by the people, but by the most exalted statesmen, and warriors, and divines; the manner in which it is puffed, not only in newspapers, but in productions that affect to be literary, all together furnish the most unequivocal proof of the superior manliness and dignity of the simple republican character. So far, therefore, from being ashamed that our government and its officers cannot afford this effeminate trumpery, we should be proud of it, as a proof that the people are well governed, since their earnings are not wasted in boundless extravagance and childish parade.

LETTER XIX.

London.

DEAR BROTHER,

THE love of distinction is inherent in human nature. As we ascend in the scale of society, this desire becomes the stronger, and it is on the direction given to it that the character of every man in a great measure depends. If it be turned towards noble objects, it becomes a love of honourable fame; if towards frivolous pursuits and fashionable eccentricities, it dwindles into a mere passion for notoriety, a desire to be distinguished for something or other, no matter what.

The votaries of this latter spurious goddess are, at present, exceedingly numerous here, especially among the young nobility, who, very early in life, begin to labour under an exhaustion of heart, and an evaporation of soul, altogether deplorable. By the time they become men, they are for the most part superannuated in desires, and in the capacity for enjoyment; and their only resource seems to be, the indulgence of a degenerate appetite, for that vulgar and momentary wonder, which is awakened by the display of some fashionable accomplishment, or some ridiculous eccentricity. Horses and dogs, liveried servants, and splendid equipages, the skill of the tailor, the hairdresser, and the jeweller, are all impressed into the service of this passion for notoriety. No amusement or luxury can be too expensive, if it only be fashionable; hundreds are given for a dog, or a horse, because none are to be found in England like it; and thousands are squandered upon themselves and their attendants, with the indiscriminate prodigality of a thoughtless spendthrift. They drive on in the career of dissipation and extravagance, unmindful of the suffering tenantry who support them, and never enter the cottage of the poor man, except to sport with his wretchedness, or to rob his daughter of her virtue. Man is an imitative being; the inferior catches the tone of his superior, and imitates his dress, his manners, and his amusements. Not only young noblemen of inferior genius, but young commoners, willing and able to pay any price for notoriety, tie their cravats, curl their whiskers as they do, and study to look as much like them as possible. These commoners are however considered an inferior cast, only tolerated in the ranks of nobility on the score of spending or losing their money with a good grace. The principal claim they have to nobility

consists in certain resemblances, which may be summed up in the following quaint lines :

“ Why surely my blood misgives me. I am of noble kind, for I find myself possessed with all their qualities : love dogs, dice, and drabs ; scorn wit in stuff clothes, as I do a handsome leg in a woollen stocking, except it be a woman’s ; have beat my shoemaker ; bullied my seamstress ; won my friend’s money, attempted his wife, and undone my tailor. Why ! look you, if this is not nobility, I inquire of you what it is. I may be the son of a duke, for the present times make nobility rather doubtful.”

Upon the strength of these affinities he claims a sort of equality, which claim is allowed while his money lasts, which is not quite for ever. He sticks to the trunk of decayed nobility like the fungus to the rotten wood ; and very often, before he is quite ruined, marries the daughter of some noble house, who assists him in getting rid of the remainder, and then, not to be an incumbrance to the poor man, runs away, belike, with one of the heroes of Waterloo.

I would not have you suppose, that all the young and middle-aged nobility of this country are like those I have just described. There are among them a few young men of promise, who may possibly become useful to the country. But they are rare birds, more so than the black swans. No one, accustomed to hear them talk, and see them act ; who has witnessed their strange follies, ridiculous inconsistencies, and unfeeling contempt for the opinions of those below them, can, with any regard to truth, deny, that he ever saw, among an equal number of well educated young men, so many ridiculous blockheads, who neither know what to do with their time or money. Sated with leisure they know not how to enjoy, and tired of pleasures they

have worn out, or which have worn out them, they one day descend to the level of a boxer, the next to that of a stage coachman, thus preparing for becoming the hereditary legislators of their country by debasing themselves to the level of ignorance and brutality. At present, the aldermanic gusto, the noble science of eating, seems to bid fair to carry the day amidst the elevated pursuits and enjoyments of these nobles; and among them are many very commendable proficient of the Apicii. This animal propensity seems one of the few natural characteristics left unimpaired; and all the morning, which lasts till seven or eight in the evening here, is spent in going through certain exercises, or swallowing certain stimulants, to prepare them for the noble solemnity of dinner. I say solemnity, because a funeral is a sort of merry-making, compared with an English feast. Nothing can equal it, except the sublime horrors of a diplomatique dinner at *****.

The natural effects of hereditary honours, and hereditary wealth, upon the human character, are a curious subject of inquiry. In feudal times, the nobility were not corrupted by luxury and idleness. If we inquire into their mode of living, it will be found that their food and drink were of the plainest kinds, and would be considered no great delicacies with our poorer sort in the United States. Instead of a life of pleasure, and effeminate dissipation, their employment was war, and their relaxations, hunting and tournaments. It was their boast to excel the common people, even in those feats of strength and activity, upon which the latter found their claim to superiority. With the advantages of wealth, rank, and a better education than their vassals, it was natural that they should exercise a great sway over them, since they excelled at least in those requisites which command the respect of

the lower orders. But in the name of all human experience, what can be expected from the old worn-out nobility of the present day? If they did not now and then ennoble a man of merit to keep up the credit of their order, it would be impossible to find persons among them fit for the most insignificant parish officers. So well is this understood here, that whenever one of these runts of antiquity is sent abroad, or appointed to a high office at home, they always select for him a dry nurse, in the shape of a secretary, to see that his lordly stupidity does not ruin or disgrace the nation.

A life exclusively devoted to pleasure and dissipation, that is to say, mere animal gratifications, almost inevitably produces, not only a complication of bodily infirmities, but also effeminate habits, which degrade a human being below the natural standard. Constitutional defects are much more apt to be hereditary than genius or moral excellence; and folly and madness, together with strange and unheard of physical infirmities, are very apt to become heirlooms in old families, with nothing but noble blood in their veins. It is not therefore much to be wondered at, if the old nobility of England and Europe has become a sort of *caput mortuum*, out of which nothing but a *caput mortuum* can come. You cannot conceive the strange and original follies, absurdities, and diseases, bodily and mental, that have generated in the worn-out, impoverished soil of nobility. I could mention some of these lordly eccentricities, these gambols of bed-ridden imbecility, that would make you bless your stars for having been born in a land of liberty, where it is next to impossible such strange monsters can be generated. But I wish not to make merry with human infirmity, and will refrain from any direct or personal allusion to these victims of hereditary honours and hereditary

infirmities. It will be sufficient to mention, that by far the most renowned exploit, performed in the fashionable world within three years past, by one of the ancient nobility, was that of the Marquis of ***** , who vaccinated his whole dog-kennel not long since. This was, beyond all comparison, the most illustrious act of his life; and the noble, I beg pardon, the "*most noble*," marquis attained to the very summit of notoriety.

Pompous notices in the Morning Chronicle, and other publications, which circulate extensively, are the means resorted to by the nobility of this country to keep up the consequence of the privileged orders; and to these shifts are they reduced to prevent the world from forgetting that such people are in existence. You hardly hear of them, except connected with some race-horse, boxing-match, or pedestrian exploit, unless it be on occasion of some ostentatious display of wasteful prodigality, or some migration from one place to another, seemingly undertaken with no other object than to get their names into the Morning Chronicle. Nothing appears to excite their sated appetites but this newspaper immortality; and to get into a magazine, is an object they will pursue with greater eagerness than Alexander did the conquest of the world. The noble ambition of becoming eminent by the exercise of talents, or the benefits conferred upon their dependants or their countrymen, seems to have become almost entirely extinct in the young race of nobles; and the last thing they appear to think of, is maintaining their dignity by dignified actions.

I am almost ashamed to confess, even to you, my dear brother, that I came to this country prepared, by habit and by reading, to see among the people of high blood and rank, creatures who realized that mysterious superiority, that noble air, and that in-

definable, indescribable, and ineffable something, which we read of in all the novels and poems so familiar to our youth. I expected to be able to detect a nobleman at first sight, as easy as a thorough bred jockey does a blood horse; and when I first came here, amused myself by selecting nobility from the mass that was continually passing and repassing before me. But numerous and mortifying to my discriminative faculty were the blunders I made. At one time I mistook the Lord for the footman, at another the footman for the Lord. At another time I selected a pickpocket, as he proved afterwards, for his Royal Highness the Duke of ****, who, I understood, was at the public meeting. But the most discouraging affair, and that which determined me no longer to trust instinct in these matters, was mistaking the most noble Marquis of *****, who was driving a stage-coach, for the driver himself! I thought I had got into a terrible scrape by the blunder, but, on the contrary, the Marquis was highly tickled with it, and told the story to all his friends in proof of his excellence in stage coachmanship.

In honest truth, a great part of the young nobility here do very little credit to their noble blood, either by their persons or their manners; and I defy the most thorough-bred novel reader to tell one of them either by his air or his appearance. The lion would now no longer recognise the blood royal by instinct, any more than the man would nobility, were either to encounter it divested of its tinsel and trappings. Some of them are the queerest, most diminutive, pinched up, elderly young creatures you ever saw. They always grow old before their time; and were it not for corsets, stuffings, and other inventions, to supply the poverty of dame nature, no stranger would ever think of mistaking them for men. They

would certainly fall to pieces were it not for their geer. There is one of these odd mannikins, or mandrakes, I can hardly tell which, who, it is affirmed, was born with a stump-tail, to the great support of Lord Monboddo's theory. The speculatists argued, that as man, in the long course of improvement, finally got rid of his tail, it was quite in the natural round of events, that it should come back again at the end of a long course of deterioration.

But far be it from me to throw any blame upon these unlucky and degraded beings. Condemned, as they are, by the very nature of their situation, to the absence of almost every motive to exert their faculties, or exercise their virtues, it is not to be wondered at, if they run riot through all the varieties of vicious indulgence or senseless eccentricity. Like butterflies, they toil not, neither do they spin, although many are eminently qualified for the distaff; and yet it may be said of them, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed *like* one of these. They possess, without merit or exertion of any kind, what others can seldom or never attain by the highest efforts of talent and industry combined—wealth and honours. Necessity never stimulates them to action; and, for the most part, the only impulse to efforts of any kind, is a sickly appetite for a worthless notoriety, or a desperate *ennui*, craving for some stimulus, no matter what, to keep them from everlasting dozing. Let us pity them, then, since it is physically, morally, and philosophically impossible for them to equal other classes of men more fortunately situated. I shall conclude this letter with a quotation from our illustrious Franklin, whose fame is every hour gathering like a rolling snowball. It conveys his reflections on the conduct of the House of Peers, when they negatived Lord Chatham's

motion for merely "*considering* his plan of conciliation with America."

"To hear," says the great philosopher, "to hear so many *hereditary legislators* declaiming so vehemently against, not the adopting, but the mere considering, of a proposal so important in its nature, offered by a person of so weighty a character, one of the first statesmen of the age, who had taken up his country in the lowest despondency, and conducted it to victory and glory through a war with two of the mightiest nations of Europe—to hear them censuring his plan, not only from their own misunderstandings of it, but from their imagination of what was not in it, which they would not give themselves an opportunity of rectifying by a second reading—to perceive the total ignorance of the subject in some; the prejudice and passion in others; and the wilful perversion of plain truth in several of the ministers—and, upon the whole, to see it rejected by so great a majority, and so hastily too, in breach of all decorum and prudent regard to the character and dignity of their body, gave me an exceeding mean opinion of their abilities, and made their claim of sovereignty over three millions of virtuous, sensible people in America, seem the greatest of all absurdities, since they appeared to have scarcely discretion enough to govern a herd of swine. *Hereditary legislators!* thought I: there would be more propriety, because less hazard of mischief, in having (as in some German universities) hereditary professors of mathematics. But this was a hasty reflection, for the *elected House of Commons* is no better, nor ever will be, while the electors receive money for their votes, and pay taxes, wherewithal ministers may bribe their representatives when chosen."

LETTER XX.

London.

DEAR BROTHER,

NOT only the English themselves, but almost all foreign writers, have agreed in pronouncing this government the best in the world. And yet, if we are to judge by its effects, it is one of the worst. Its debts amount to more than those of all the rest of the world put together; its taxes to more than those of all Europe; and the number of its paupers is greater in proportion than that of any country on the face of the earth. If then the tree be known by its fruits—if the effects of a system of government are to be taken as the criterion of its excellence, and the wisdom of its measures is to be tried by consequences, it does appear to me, that the constitution of England must either be a bad one, or that it has been badly administered. Lookers on often see more than actors; and what is overlooked from habit, by the natives of a country, is often precisely the ground upon which a stranger founds his conclusions. For my part, I do not make any pretensions to political wisdom; but having been born and brought up in a country where every man pays more or less attention to the subject, and having since had an opportunity of looking pretty narrowly into the mode in which

nations are governed in this old rickety world, I may possibly have caught some views that may serve to amuse, if not enlighten you.

From the time of the Saxon Wittenagemot, the government of England has never been the same for an age together; nor, amidst all the vague adulation lavished upon it at different times, have its most learned writers been able to agree in its principles. The law and the constitution were both settled by Blackstone, whose theories were adopted through the influence of the judges subservient to the crown, simply because they place the authority of the king pretty much upon the same footing with Hume, in his History of England. Both Blackstone and Hume were among the most able and insidious enemies to the freedom of Englishmen that England has ever produced, since they both recognise fundamental principles, that, when acted upon in their fullest extent, amount very nearly to the old dogmas of divine right, passive obedience, and non-resistance. When therefore a controversy arises, involving the prerogative of the king, or the rights of the people, instead of having a written constitution, plain in its language, and intelligible in its meaning, to decide between them, each party forthwith enters upon the most laborious researches into old charters, monkish chronicles, and vague authorities, generally admitting of at least two interpretations. The question thus becomes involved in endless discussion, and at last comes to be settled by a jury of antiquaries, who decide upon the rights of the people of England, pretty much on the same grounds they would settle a dispute about the sarcophagus of Alexander, or the era of Belzoni's mummy. How different from our simple constitution and its admirable commentary, the Federalist. Here is no ambiguity, no necessity to

draw authority from ages of the world, when the state of society was totally different from what it is now. The sovereignty of the people is distinctly asserted; and if any disputes arise respecting the prerogative of the government, it is the people who decide, on the eternal basis of reason and justice, founded in the maxim of our sage Dr. Franklin, that "those who feel can best judge." A near inspection of English history will clearly show, that the government mainly depends upon the character of the king and his ministers. A king, who had money, troops, and talents, bullied his parliament with impunity; while one who had neither, was bullied by parliament in turn. The balance was continually changing in favour of one or the other, and as the very nature of the government changed with it, nothing can be more obvious, than that there would be little of permanent principle, or consistency of action under such circumstances.

It appears, that one great support of the parliamentary influence, in the more early ages of England, was the absence of a regular and well defined principle of hereditary right. For a long time the succession of the kings of England, as well as those of Europe, was not regulated altogether by the mere possession of an hereditary claim, according to the present established rule of primogeniture. It was a mixture of right on the part of the king, and of choice on the part of the people; or the popular assent was conveyed by such representatives as they possessed in the councils of the nation. Richard the First was elevated to the throne "by hereditary right, *after* a solemn election by the clergy and people." So says the Chronicle of Dunstable. In relation to the disputed right of succession between John, and Arthur his nephew, archbishop Hubert declared the crown elective; and that with

respect to the blood royal, there was no other preference than their merits might claim. This same John calls himself king of England "by hereditary right, and through the consent and favour of the church and people." Various other instances occur in Mr. Hallam's history of the middle ages, which prove that mere hereditary right was not a sufficient title to the throne, without the consent of the people. The ceremony of the coronation; the champion of England throwing his gauntlet, and challenging any one to contest the right of the king, though it appears, and indeed is, under present circumstances, a pretty mockery, was originally, beyond doubt, intended as a direct appeal to the popular consent, without which no king considered his dignity legally conferred. Hence the importance given in the days of York and Lancaster to this ceremony; and hence the apt saying which Shakspeare, who was a great reader of old chronicles, puts into the mouth of Richard the Third: they, his nephews, shall have crowns and sceptres in abundance, "but no coronation—no coronation," says the wily uncle.

It was not till the thirteenth century, that the English lawyers attempted to regulate the succession to the kingdom by the same rules which they applied to a private inheritance, thereby placing the powers of the crown nearly upon the same footing with those of a subject over his property. Under this rule, I see no reason why the king might not at any time sell his kingdom and people to the highest bidder, as did the margrave of Anspach, not many years ago. It was probably about the same period, that the subtlety of the lawyers invented the notable fictions, that the king never dies, and can do no wrong; and that this was the era, when the servility of the clergy first broached the doctrine of the divine right of kings; that is to say,

a right altogether independent of the consent of either of the other branches of the government. Previously to this servile age, we find that most of the nations of Europe, as well as England, possessed, in no inconsiderable degree, the spirit of resistance to absolute power. The parliament and national assemblies of France, on various occasions, stoutly resisted the pretensions of the king; and even the courtly *cortes* of Spain relaxed so far in the etiquette preserved towards their monarch, as to return for answer to some of his orders, "that they should be obeyed, and not complied with." But a reference to the history of England will show, that from the time these servile principles were incorporated into church and state, until the days of the puritans, *our* admirable ancestors, that country was governed in the most arbitrary manner.

This appears more distinctly in the history of Henry the Eighth, who, though a bad man, was, according to my thinking, one of the greatest kings that ever reigned over England, and one to whom she is more indebted than to any before or since, save Alfred the Great. His dissolution of the monasteries was a master-stroke. It took away from the idle drones, and gave to the industrious bees, almost one-third of the lands of the kingdom; and from that moment we date, not only the prosperity, but the dawning freedom, which eventually produced a revolution in England. The barrier of ancient abuses was thus broken down, because a vast property had fallen into new hands, who would naturally resist every attempt to retrograde into the old system, which would perhaps lead to a reclamation of their new acquisitions. The best, I might almost say, the only security for the permanency of any great political change, is the change of property which it naturally produces.

Without this, the power remains where it was before ; and the same influence of wealth which established the old order of things, will soon overturn the new.

Perhaps the vices of no king on record ever produced such salutary effects to his people, as those of Henry. His desire of getting a new wife freed England from the domination of the Pope. His tyrannical disposition towards the nobility broke, in a great degree, the power of that formidable aristocracy, by the condemnation of some of the most powerful subjects ; and this being followed up by the ruin of others in the reigns of Mary and Elizabeth, finally weakened that body to such a degree, that not long after we find the representatives of the commons of England speaking in a tone, and displaying a spirit, worthy the third estate of a great kingdom.

I am not in the least inclined to defend the conduct of his majesty in respect to his wives. There is good ground, however, for believing that the only good one he had, was Catharine of Arragon, who, being a most zealous catholic, beyond doubt, opposed Henry's designs upon the monasteries. Perhaps this might have been one of the causes of his disgust. It is impossible to tell at this late date, for there is great uncertainty with regard to the characters of persons who figured about this period. Mr. Horace Walpole has produced sufficient authority to prove, that the characters of Henry the Seventh and Richard the Third, have not come down to us correctly ; and of Henry the Eighth it may be truly said, I think, that if he had been governed by the purest motives in all his actions, he would have stood little chance with posterity. The catholic writers owed him a grudge on the score of the monasteries ; and the protestants bore him no good will, because he suf-

ferred some of their leaders to be brought to the stake. He was neither catholic nor protestant ; of course he fared like a man between two fires. Queen Mary, his daughter, no doubt remembered the divorce, and Queen Elizabeth the execution of her mother ; and it is not probable that either of them would set the fashion of praising their father. In short, it was neither the interest of catholic nor protestant, courtier nor commonwealth's man, to praise king Henry, although, whatever may have been the motives of his leading political measures, they were certainly such as only wanted a good motive to entitle him to the gratitude of the English nation. As it is, the only honour ever paid to his memory was making him a sort of patron to gamblers, and putting his jolly face upon record on a pack of cards. I am strongly inclined to believe it will appear, on a closer examination, that this monarch was rather the oppressor of his nobility than the tyrant of his people. And truly, the former seem to have been, for the most part, worthy the treatment they met with. The long struggles of the two houses of York and Lancaster, resulting sometimes in the elevation of one and sometimes the other, had early accustomed them to transfer their allegiance from necessity or interest, just as suited either. Not only this, but the conflicting claims, and doubtful rights of either house, had rendered the nobility masters of the crown, which they could dispose of at pleasure. They accordingly were accustomed to barter their support for the titles and estates of their opponents ; and the whole of this period, from the beginning of the wars of the two roses to the accession of Elizabeth, exhibits a series of faithfulness to their principles, a treachery to each other, and a habit of sacrificing the ties of friendship and kindred for wealth and honours,

that will for ever stain the annals of England, and the reputation of its nobility.

It might humble the vanity of the descendants of these unprincipled nobles, were they to see with the eyes of others into the means, by which they are enabled to look down upon their fellow-creatures. In running over the history of their houses, they would scarcely find a solitary one, which does not present examples, almost without end, of oppression to the people and disloyalty to the king—of cruelty, treachery, deceit, falsehood, and ferocity—of the sacrifice, in short, of their own duties and the rights of others. Were they to study these as they ought, surely the pride of ancestry would be buried in the humiliation of eternal shame. Of the numerous heads that fell under the axe of Henry, few, very few, were exempt from guilt of various degrees, though perhaps innocent of the crime for which they suffered. They sat in judgment one day, and bartered their conscience for the favour of the king, and the next suffered under a perversion of justice, sanctioned by their own example. Among all the male victims of Henry's tyranny, the "gallant Surrey" has deservedly called forth the greatest sympathy; yet it is now certain, that while sighing at the feet of his Geraldine, and offering his hand to her acceptance, he had a wife living, the mother of his five children, and from whom he was never divorced! Be this as it may, before the time of Henry there was hardly a glimpse of freedom in this country. By depressing the nobility and stripping the church of the acquisitions of ages, he exalted the people, whose support became necessary to sustain him against the resentment of the privileged orders. He accordingly continued all his life a popular monarch; and, though the united voice of history is against him,

is still a sort of favourite with the people of this country.

The spirit of religious and political freedom, beyond doubt, received its great awakening impulse, after its long sleep in England, in the reign of Henry the Eighth. The turbulent scenes, which ensued between his death and the accession of Elizabeth, afforded little opportunity for its exercise ; yet it is probable that these struggles for empire, by rendering the popular support more important, were favourable to the progress of free principles. The protestant religion certainly made great advances during this period ; and every new modification of an established church will be found favourable to human freedom at first, since it depends for its earliest support on an appeal to the people at large, to uphold it against the power of the state.

Queen Elizabeth undoubtedly governed with a high hand, and bullied the parliament in the true style of an absolute monarch. But she belonged to the popular religion, and could of course do any thing with a majority of the people. Still in the speeches of Paul Wentworth, and others, during her reign and that of James the First, we see completely developed the principles which led, first king Charles to the block, and secondly drove king James into exile. It was not long after this period, that our ancestors brought with them, to the New World, those principles, those genuine principles of freedom, which they planted with the first grain of wheat, and which I trust will flourish there, as long as a field of wheat shall wave in golden lustre to the eye.

The whole of the proceedings of the parliament, in its contest with Charles the First, have been placed under the head of rebellion, because the historians, who have handed them down to posterity,

ty, were bishops and courtiers. Yet it is clear, I think, from the whole previous history of England, that the parliament of England exercised the privilege of deciding, not only on the right to the crown, but likewise when it was forfeited by abuse, oppression, or incapacity. Sir Thomas More, chancellor to Henry the Eighth, and one of the most learned as well as upright statesmen and lawyers of his age, expressly admitted, on being questioned on that subject, "that he would pay allegiance to any person declared king by a vote of parliament." It is equally certain, that the only legal authority, employed in settling the terms on which William and Mary came into the succession, was that of the parliament of England representing the people of England; and it is equally certain that the grounds, on which the throne was declared vacant on the flight of king James, were nearly the same with those of the petition of right presented to Charles the First by his parliament, and made the basis of the subsequent opposition. King Charles staid at home, took up arms, was overpowered and finally executed. King James, having this catastrophe before his eyes, retired to France, and the throne was declared vacant. The divine right of kings, the right of hereditary succession, and every principle in fact, so much insisted and relied upon in the present day, as essential to the dignity and safety of the crown, was completely violated. Yet the leaders of this revolution are considered the benefactors of the nation, and the restorers of its ancient rights. If they had failed in their attempt, and the son of James had succeeded his father, what would another bishop Burnett, and another lord Clarendon have said of them, I wonder?

But, though the very basis of the revolution in 1688 was laid in the ruins of all the old dogmas of the 13th century, it is quite remarkable, that these

pretensions have been retained in the books treating of prerogative, and circulated by the orthodox writers of the established church. The divine right is still asserted in the assumption of his title by the "grace of God" alone ; and in no instance is there indicated in the writings of the late champions of prerogative, that any extremity of misrule, any excess of tyranny, or abuses of power, can justify resistance or vacate the throne. The absurdity, that the king can do no wrong, and that the ministers alone are to answer for the measures of government, is placed side by side with the other absurdity of a king by divine right, who governs his people of course by his own sovereign will, and yet makes others responsible for his actions. It would seem impossible for these metaphysics in politics to be revived with any prospect of success at this period. But the effort is making ; religion, as usual, has been enlisted on the side of oppression, and it is expected to lure mankind back again to a degrading submission to man, under pretence of its being one of the great characteristics of obedience to God.

It having been fashionable among us at home, to perceive a striking similiarity between the government of the United States and that of Great Britain, and this supposed resemblance having, as I am inclined to believe, led us into a mischievous habit of thinking, that to imitate the latter is the perfection of wisdom, I will devote a letter or two to the purpose of dispelling the error, if possible.

The king of England, holding his office by divine right, his person is "sacred," and it is held high treason even to "imagine" his death. The law of England says, that a lunatic or an idiot cannot commit felony, petit treason, nor any species of high treason ; yet if a lunatic or idiot shall kill or attempt to kill the king, he shall be punished as a traitor. The king is not permitted even to take

his physic as other people do, but must consult his council, who appoint his physicians by warrant, and these must prepare the medicines themselves, instead of sending their prescriptions to an apothecary.

The king of England possesses the supreme right of patronage, or *patronage paramount*, over all the ecclesiastical benefices of England. By his royal prerogative he has power, without the consent of parliament, to declare war ; he may at pleasure adjourn, prorogue, remove, or dissolve parliaments ; increase at pleasure the number of the house of lords, by creating new barons, and thus give himself a majority on all occasions ; by his letters patent he may erect boroughs, universities, colleges, forests, chases, fairs, &c. He is the *ultimus haeres-regni*, and all gold and silver mines, on whose ground soever they are found, as well as all royal fishes, whales, sturgeons, dolphins, &c. together with the royal fowls, such as swans, wild-geese, &c. belong to his majesty. Add to these, that by the various exemptions he enjoys from the common operation of the laws, he is placed entirely beyond their reach, both in civil and criminal cases. The laws of England, says an old writer, "looking upon the king as God's vicegerent upon earth, do attribute to him divers excellencies, not belonging to other men : so the law will have no imperfection found in the king ; as no injustice, no error, no negligence, no laches, no infamy, no stain, or corruption of blood. No nonage, or minority, but a mind of perpetuity, not to say immortality, the law attributeth to him. He is said not to be subject to death, because he is a corporation within himself that liveth for ever ; all interregnum being in England unknown." Such fictions and absurdities are certainly essential to the maintenance of a system founded in absurdity ; but they are quite sufficient

to show, that there is no essential resemblance between a king of England and a president of the United States.

It has been usual, among the supporters of the present system of government, to argue, that the prerogative of a king of England, and his influence in the state, have been greatly diminished since the time of Charles the First, by the abolition of the star-chamber court, and court of high commission; the restraining of the king's power to declare martial law, and levy taxes without the consent of parliament; the disuse of the forest laws; the abolition of military tenures, pre-emption and purveyance; by the habeas corpus act; by the law against the omission to call a parliament at least once in three years; by giving the judges an apparent independence, by making their salaries and office permanent; by the alienation of the crown lands, and by the remission or discontinuance of many of those outward ceremonies, those degrading tokens of submission, formerly enacted by the sovereign, and paid by the highest of his subjects.

Yet a little reflection will show, that the crown has gained far more than it has lost, or resigned, within the last two centuries. The allowance now made to the king, on his accession to the throne, as a matter of course, is probably five times greater than the revenue ever derived from the crown lands. The increased patronage, civil and military, exercised by the king without the control of any other branch of the government; the infinite extension of the revenue system; the receipts and expenditures of the state; the infinite increase in the number of revenue officers, the commissioners, subalterns, and dependants; the commissioners of stamps, hackney coaches, &c.; managers of the salt duties, lotteries, &c.; surveyors of windows, houses, &c.; the receivers of the land tax, and an infinite

number of other caterpillars of the state, all appointed, and all removeable at the sole will and pleasure of the king, are scattered through every town and district, pervade all ranks and classes of society, and carry the influence of the crown to an extent hitherto entirely unknown. The national debt and the national taxes have entirely destroyed the equilibrium of the constitution, by putting at the disposal of the crown the almost unlimited means of influencing the two other branches of the government. Proofs of this growing influence occur every day ; in the readiness with which parliament dispenses with the habeas corpus ; acquiesces in the excesses of the military power, and gives a whole people up to the unbridled licentiousness of military law, at the simple recommendation of a secretary of the lord lieutenant of Ireland. Every thing I see, and every thing I hear, in this country, satisfies me, that although the crown has lost a feather or a bauble here and there, it has gained in exchange an influence and power, which, if not checked, and that speedily too by the people themselves, will enable it to establish a confirmed and inflexible despotism. It is in fact of little consequence, what prerogatives are taken from the king, so long as he is left the means of rendering the parliament subservient to his views. The popular branch of a government can alone betray, because that alone is entrusted with the liberties of the people.

The queen is reputed the second person in the kingdom, and to conspire her death, or attempt her chastity, is high treason. The heir apparent, if the king's eldest son, is, in the eye of the law, a very singular sort of person. He is reputed "the same person as the king" by a statute of Henry the Eighth. Yet being in nature a distinct person from the king, he is notwithstanding a subject, and pays the same

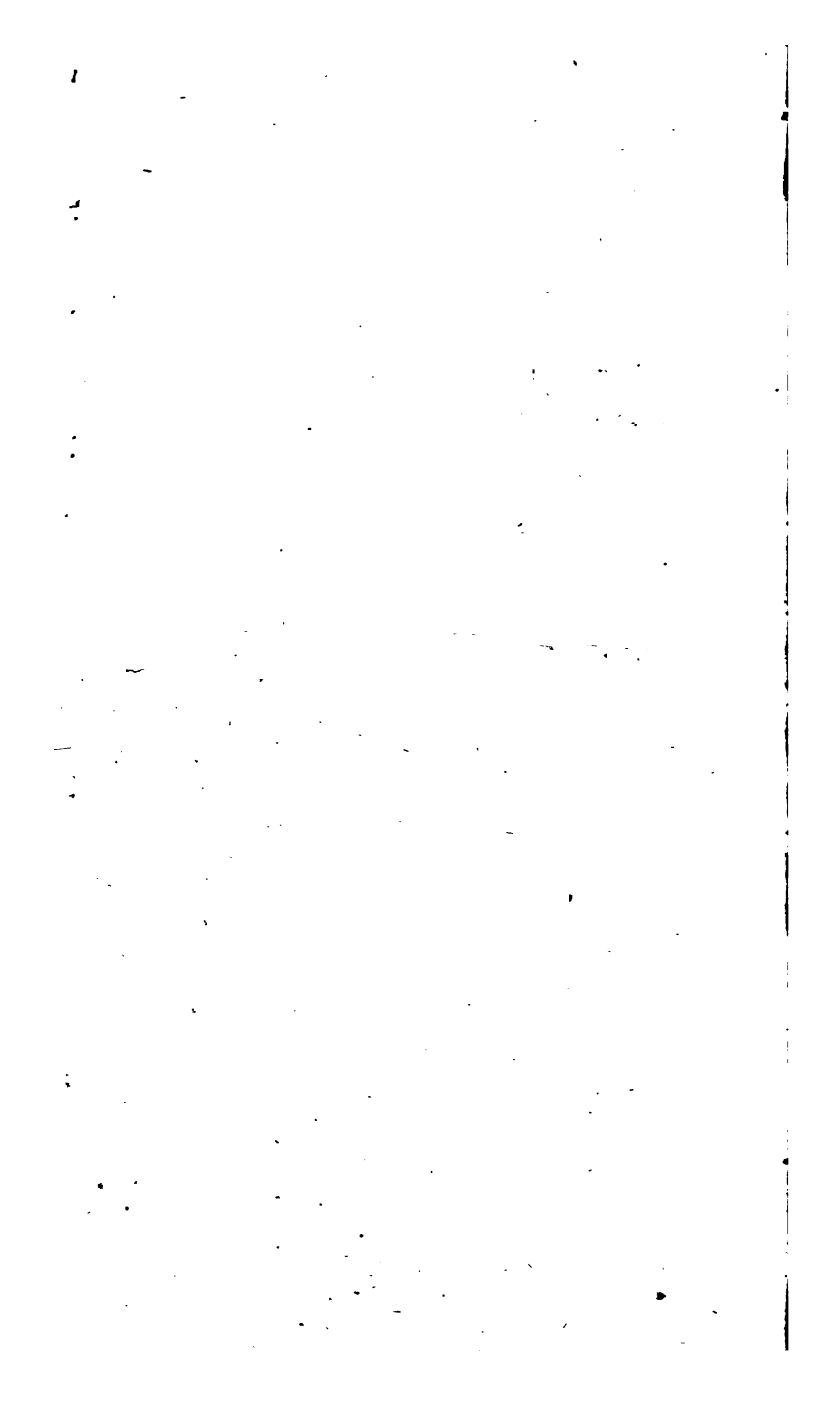
respect to him as other subjects. To imagine his death, or to hold illicit intercourse with his wife, is also high treason, although there is no punishment for an offence of this kind on his part. The boast of the English writers, with regard to the equality of the laws, in their operation upon all Englishmen, is in fact narrowed by so many exceptions, that it can hardly be considered as well founded. All the servants of the king, every member of the royal family, every dignitary of the church, and every nobleman, has certain privileges, and certain exemptions from the ordinary operations of the laws, that in no inconsiderable degree destroy their boasted equal distribution of justice. In the succeeding letters I shall perhaps produce other instances, that will throw additional light on the subject.

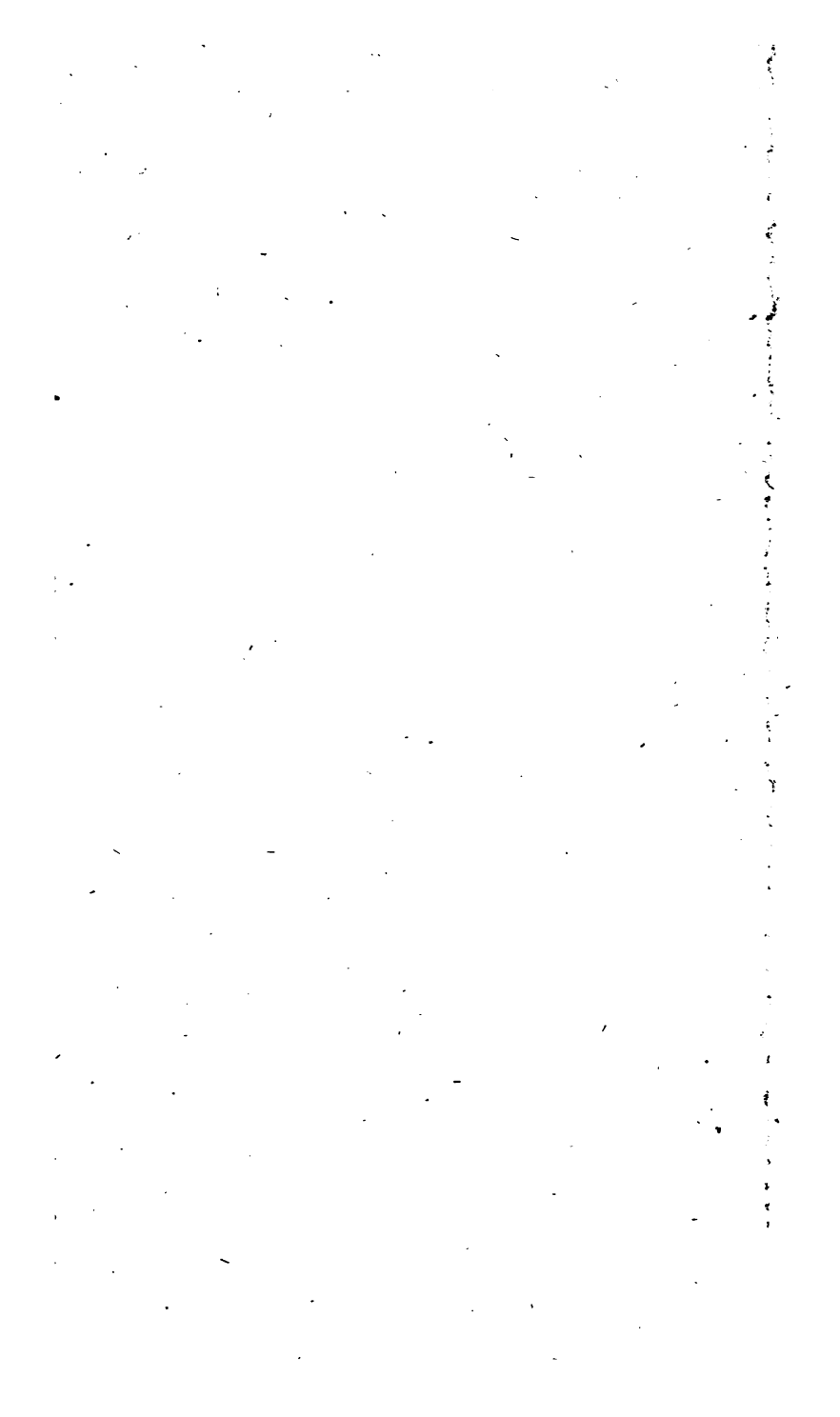
For the present I will merely observe, that the habit of undue deference to rank, which is part of the very nature of mankind in a government founded upon the distinctions of rank, is so strong in this country, as to give rank a decided advantage in all cases of controversy, admitting the claims of the parties to be equal in other respects. In the first place, it deters a lowly man from prosecuting his rights against a nobleman; and in the second place, the judges themselves, being for the most part taken from the middling class of society, for their merit, their learning, or their political services, very often bring to the bench an inordinate respect for the titled, and an inordinate contempt for the untitled suitor. I do not deny, that there are noble specimens of judicial uprightness and independence in the history of England; but where there has been one *Holt* or *Hale*, there have been a dozen tools of power. No one, that sees the harsh contempt or supercilious arrogance of the present chief justice, towards a miserable creature charged with treason or a libel, and the evident want of even

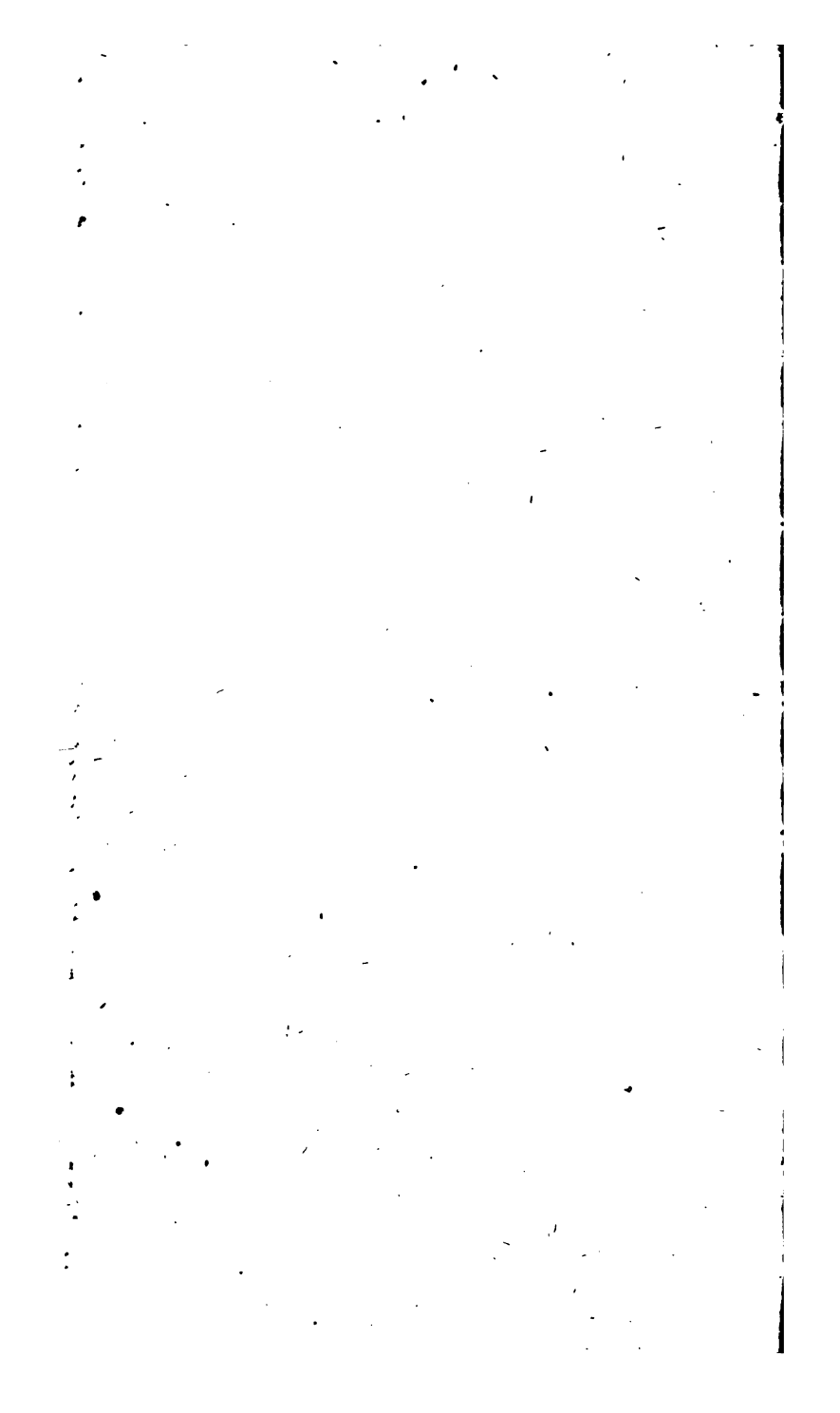
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the affectation of impartiality he displays on the occasion, can forbear calling to mind the miserable period of popish plots, violated charters, and quaker persecutions, when the judge of the king was the champion of prerogative, and the instrument of oppression. The mere merit of deciding justly between the pecuniary claims of two indifferent persons, is a common merit, of which none but the most corrupt beings are destitute. But a judge, that, in the conflicting struggles of power on one hand, and the people on the other, has the dignified courage, the inflexible integrity of heart, to stand before the rolling wave of prerogative, and make himself the barrier of the people, instead of becoming the slave of the king, is one among a million, and one whom the million have not seen in this country for many years.

END OF VOL. I.









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